



# **SPECIAL EDUCATION REPORT 2016-2017**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Section 1	Model for Special Education	1
Section 2	Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process	2
Section 3	Special Education Placements provided by the Board	8
Section 4	Individual Education Plans (IEP)	12
Section 5	Special Education Staff	18
Section 6	Specialized Equipment	21
Section 7	Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs	23
Section 8	Transition Planning	24

## **PROVINCIAL INFORMATION**

Section 1	Roles and Responsibilities in Special Education	25
Section 2	Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities	28
Section 3	Provincial and Demonstrations Schools in Ontario	31

## **OTHER RELATED INFORMATION**

Section 1	Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	33
Section 2	Educational and Other Assessments	37
Section 3	Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies	39
Section 4	Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings	45
Section 5	Staff Development	50
Section 6	Accessibility (AODA)	51
Section 7	Parent Guide to Special Education (Under Revision)	52
Section 8	The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	75

## A. FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

In the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN), Special Education is a collaborative process that encompasses the supports, services and strategies that provide the opportunities for each student to reach his/her potential.

The general philosophy and service delivery model for the District School Board of Niagara is based on the following premises:

- Parents/guardians are an important part of a student's success and are therefore invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's education through ongoing communication between the family and school personnel.
- An In-School Team is expected to facilitate the collaborative problem solving, decision making and planning for students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning environment.
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is established for every student identified as Exceptional and any other student requiring an IEP as determined by the In-School Team.
- All students identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) as Exceptional, as defined by the Ministry of Education, are served in the most enabling environment available.
- A range of placements is available across the District School Board of Niagara.
- Age appropriate opportunities for integration are planned, consistent with the learning needs of the student as part of the Individual Education Plan for each student.

## B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

- All students can learn and should experience learning success.
- All students with special learning needs will receive special education services to help meet those needs.
- Parents/guardians are an important part of a student's success.
- Students have a right to learn in the classroom setting that best meets their needs.
- School communities recognize the value and contribution of every student.
- Efforts to build or adapt educational services to accommodate students with disabilities in a way that promotes their inclusion and full participation are considered first. (*Ontario Human Rights Council*)

## C. BOARD POLICIES

The Board's general model for Special Education is articulated within Board Policy D-9: Framework for the Provincial Special Education Services.

The Special Education Report outlined in the following pages complies with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and all regulations made under the Act.

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### IDENTIFICATION AND PLACEMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC)

The District School Board of Niagara adheres to Ministry Regulation 181/98 and has established policies to reflect this regulation.

Regulation 181/98 outlines the responsibilities of the Board in identifying and placing students who have been identified as Exceptional. Prior to the IPRC being convened, parents/guardians will receive a Parents' Guide to Special Education. The Parents' Guide includes:

- in-depth information about the IPRC process;
- names and addresses of provincial and demonstration schools;
- lists of local associations eligible to be on SEAC.

The highlights that may affect practice are outlined below:

- the IPRC is required to define a pupil's exceptionality and lists the strengths and needs of the pupil;
- if a pupil is placed in a special education class, reasons for the placement must be stated;
- parents/guardians and pupils age 16 and over have a right to participate in all discussions and advocate for themselves. They may have a representative present to speak on their behalf or otherwise support them;
- parental input is welcomed at every IPRC;
- the IPRC shall decide to place an exceptional pupil in a regular class when such a placement meets the pupil's needs and is in accordance with parental preference;
- the IPRC may discuss Special Education programs and services and may make recommendations. The Principal shall take committee recommendations into consideration for the development of the IEP;
- an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is developed with the parent/guardian and pupil input, where the pupil is 16 years of age or older, and must be developed within 30 school days after identification/placement.

#### **IPRC Membership** (3 members mandatory)

- Principal to chair
- Learning Resource Teacher (LRT)/Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)
- One other member - classroom teacher or special class teacher
- Resource Teacher - Special Education or Consultant – Special Education is also available as a resource
- Resource Teacher or Consultant may attend any meeting where a new identification or placement may be made
- Although parents are not, by Ministry regulations, a member, they are an integral part of the collaborative process.

#### **Role of the Principal - Chair**

- Establish a warm, welcoming environment.
- Introduce all participants and establish the purpose of the meeting.
- Lead the discussion and encourage input from all participants.
- Ensure that all relevant information is shared.
- Keep the meeting focused and bring closure to the discussion.
- Summarize the decisions, explaining them clearly.
- Ensure that the necessary documentation has been completed.
- Secure signatures as appropriate.



**Location**

- IPRC meetings are typically held at the school attended by the student.

**Placement Decisions**

- Special Education class full-time
- Special Education class with partial integration
- Regular class with withdrawal assistance
- Regular class with resource assistance
- Regular class with indirect support

**Annual Review**

The date of the next Review must be noted. A Review must be held annually unless a parent/guardian chooses to dispense with the Review for that year.

**PRIOR TO THE IPRC MEETING**

Parents/guardians are offered a Parents' Guide to Special Education

- prior to an assessment and/or
- in preparation for an IPRC.

School personnel should discuss the Parents' Guide to Special Education with parents/guardians.

**The LRT/SERT:**

- Assembles all available information (i.e., Educational Profile);
- Confirms that any assessment results have been shared with the parents/guardians;
- Confirms date with Resource Teacher/Consultant if identification/placement program is possible;
- Issues an invitation to the IPRC meeting in writing 10 days in advance to the parents/guardians;
- Invites the potential receiving school if a change in school program is being considered;
- Prepares appropriate documents for the committee.

**At the Meeting – Framework of IPRC Meeting**

- Parent/guardian input is sought.
- Student input is sought as appropriate.
- Interventions/strategies are reviewed.
- Strengths/needs are discussed.
- Progress is reviewed.
- Assessment results are discussed.
- A decision is arrived at and recorded:

1) Exceptional - designation - definition of area of exceptionality

2) Placement -      Special Education class full-time  
                               Special Education class with partial integration  
                               Regular class with withdrawal assistance  
                               Regular class with resource assistance  
                               Regular class with indirect support

- The most appropriate program, in response to the exceptionality and placement decision is discussed.
- Agreement of parents/guardians is secured and a copy of the decision is provided to parents/guardians.
- The original is signed and placed in the OSR. (Ontario Student Record)

**Following the Meeting**

- Completed IPRC paperwork is filed in the OSR and provides documentation for Special Education Services;
- Appropriate documentation, signed and dated is filed in the OSR, if parents/guardians have chosen to dispense with the review.
- The Board is notified (Administrative Secretary - Special Education, SSS) of the decision by submitting a copy of the parent/guardian consent to dispense or the completed IPRC form immediately by courier.
- Parent is informed of the Appeal Process

**APPEAL PROCESS**

It is the Board's practice to endeavor to resolve issues or disputes prior to the commencement of an appeal process.

- After information gathering and further discussion, a second IPRC may be convened. Parents/guardians may request a second meeting with the Committee within 15 days of receiving the statement of decision. The request should be sent to the Principal of the school that the student presently attends.
- The chair of the IPRC will arrange for the committee to meet, as soon as possible, with the parent/guardian or pupil (16 or over).
- After discussion, the committee decision will be forwarded in writing to each of the persons involved in the IPRC, stating whether any changes in the decision were made.
- Within 30 days of receipt of the original decision or within 15 days of receipt of the decision of the aforementioned second meeting, parents/guardians who disagree with the Committee's decision, must give written notification of their intention to appeal the decision to the Secretary of the District School Board of Niagara, 191 Carlton Street, St. Catharines, Ontario. L2R 7P4
- By filing a notice of appeal, a hearing by a Special Education Appeal Board is required.

**All appeals will be handled in accordance with  
Regulation 181/98 - Section VI Appeals from Committee Decisions**

A parent/guardian may, by filing a notice of appeal, require a hearing by a Special Education Appeal Board in respect of a Committee decision:

- that the pupil is an exceptional pupil;
- that the pupil is not an exceptional pupil;
- regarding the placement of the pupil.

A notice of appeal shall indicate with which decision the parent/guardian disagrees and shall include a statement that sets out the nature of the disagreement.

The Special Education Appeal Board shall be composed of:

- i) one member selected by the Board;
- ii) one member selected by the parent/guardian of the pupil;
- iii) a chair jointly selected by the two members described above.

Selection of the Board and parent/guardian selectees shall take place within 15 days of receipt of the appeal by the Secretary of the Board. Selection of the chair shall be made within the next 15 days.

No member or employee of the Board or Ministry of Education shall be selected under (i) nor will anyone with prior involvement be selected.

The chair of the committee making the contested decision will provide:

- a record of the committee proceeding including the statement of decision;

- any reports, assessments or other documents.

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The Board shall provide secretarial and administrative services and in accordance with policies that apply to members of the Board, pay travelling and other expenses incurred.

The chair will arrange for a meeting and shall give notice of the meeting to the parent/guardian (pupil 16 yrs. or over). The meeting shall take place within 30 days of the selection of the chair. The meeting shall be conducted in an informal manner.

- Any person who in the opinion of the chair may be able to contribute shall be invited to attend.
- Where the Appeal Board is satisfied that views and opinions have been sufficiently presented, the meeting will end.

Within 3 days, the Appeal Board will:

- agree with the committee and recommend that the decision be implemented;
- disagree with the committee and make a recommendation to the Board about the pupil's identification, placement or both.

The Special Education Appeal Board shall send a written statement of its recommendations to:

- a parent/guardian of the pupil;
- where pupil is over 16, the pupil;
- the chair of the committee;
- the Principal of the school in which the pupil is placed;
- the designated representative of the Board.

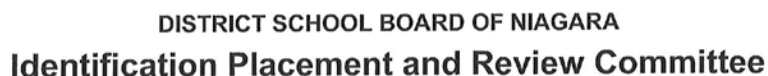
A written statement shall be accompanied by written reasons for the recommendations.

Within 30 days of receipt of the recommendations, the Board shall decide what action to take and shall give notice in writing of the decision. The Board shall consider the Appeal Board's recommendation but is not limited to the action recommended. The notice to parent/guardian of the Board's decision shall include an explanation of the further right of appeal provided for by Section 57 of the Act.

The Board shall implement a decision when:

- a parent/guardian consents in writing;
- 30 days have elapsed and no further notice of appeal has been received;
- an appeal under Section 57 is dismissed or abandoned.

## IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS



Student strengths and needs are identified on reverse

☐ Recommendations for an IEP and/or reasons for special class placement on reverse

Original to OSR Documentation File

## Special Education Programs and Services

Areas of Strength	Areas of Need
Program Recommendations for an IEP	
Reasons for Special Class placement (if applicable)	

DEFINITION(S):

Personal and health information on this form is collected, used and disclosed in accordance with the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2, as amended, the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.M. 56, as amended, and the Personal Health Information Protection Act, S.O. 2004, c.3, and will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility for, and, for providing Special Education Programs and Services. Questions about this collection, use and disclosure should be directed to the Administrator - Special Education Services Department, District School Board of Niagara, Don Reilly Resource Centre, 13227 Lundy's Lane, Allanburg, Ontario L0S 1A0, (905) 227-5551

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### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

The District School Board of Niagara is committed to the following guiding principles regarding their Special Education Programs and Services.

- The Board provides Special Education programs and services to students based on individual need.
- Each exceptional student as defined by the Ministry of Education is served in the most enabling environment available for the student.
- Programs and services are consistent with the Board's Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services - Policy D-9.
- Placement of a student in a regular class is the first option considered by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).
- A range of placements are available across the District School Board of Niagara.
  - Special Education Class full-time
  - Special Education Class with partial integration
  - Regular class with withdrawal assistance
  - Regular class with resource assistance
  - Regular class with indirect support
- An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be established for every identified student and any other student requiring an IEP as determined by the In-School Team (IST) or ISSST (In-School Student Success Team).
- Appropriate accommodations and modifications based on a student's strengths and needs will be implemented.
- Age appropriate opportunities for integration will be planned, consistent with the learning needs of the student as part of the Individual Education Plan for each student.
- Reporting will be consistent with the requirements of the Provincial Report Card.
- Alternative subjects or courses will be reported on the DSNB Alternative Report Card.

### **OVERVIEW OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

Services and programs provided are based on individual student strengths and needs and may result in:

- Accommodated programming provided by the classroom teacher to meet the students' needs.
- Development of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) under the guidance of the In-School Team.
- Planned intervention of an Elementary Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) or Secondary Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT):
  - Joint planning with classroom teacher;
  - In class support;
  - Withdrawal to a resource room.
- Support of the School Support Services - Special Education Team.
- Special Education class placement as determined by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC).
- Support for application to outside agencies (e.g., Community Care Access Centre).

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### ACCOMMODATED, MODIFIED AND ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING

The Ontario Curriculum is intended for all students. Students who have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review committee (IPRC) may have their program adapted to better address their identified learning needs. The Ontario Curriculum may be accommodated or modified. Some students with significant needs may participate in alternative subjects or courses in which the expectations are not taken from the Ontario Curriculum. Any change to regular programming, as outlined in the IEP, is implemented to assist students in reaching their potential.

#### Accommodated Program

A student's program is accommodated when the student is learning and being assessed on grade level expectations but the *how*, *when* and *where* of program delivery is altered. Teachers often accommodate students as a part of classroom instruction and management.

For example:

- Oral assessment instead of written assignments
- Extra time to complete tests
- Preferential seating

#### Modified Program

A student's program is modified when the *what* of program delivery has been changed. A program is modified when the expectations for the age appropriate grade level have been changed by:

- reaching back to earlier grades
- reducing the number or complexity of grade level expectation

Students on a modified program also receive accommodations. Evaluation of a student on a modified program is based on the measure of progress toward the expectations outlined in the student's IEP rather than in comparison to grade level Ontario curriculum expectations.

#### Alternative Program

An alternative program refers to subjects or courses for which there is no Ontario curriculum. Examples of alternative programs are Daily Living Skills, Social Skills and Higher Order Thinking Skills. Students in an alternative program may also receive accommodations. Student progress in an alternative program is reported on the DSBN Alternative Report Card in line with Provincial reporting timelines.

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For all exceptionalities a range of placement options is available within the regular classroom; regular class with indirect support, resource assistance and withdrawal assistance. The LRT/SERT is a qualified Special Education teacher who may support students in regular education.

Special class placements are available for some students as outlined below.

The IPRC considers student strengths and needs in determining placement in the most enabling environment.

### **Structured Strategies Program**

This low-enrolment classroom engages learners working on Ontario Curriculum, with supplementary programming in social skills development and self-regulation. Strategies may include, leveled breaks, sensory and movement breaks, social skills programming, assistive technology and a structured classroom environment. The goal of the program is to help students develop the independent self-regulation skills necessary to be successful in the regular classroom setting. This program is a collaborative approach to learning/teaching, and is supported by a special education teacher and educational assistant.

### **Communication Program**

This class supports students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and significant needs in the areas of expressive and receptive communication skills. Programming is based around individual needs and addressed through alternative curriculum. Augmentative communication strategies are used to promote independence, communication, and sensory regulation.

### **Fundamental Skills Program**

This low-enrolment classroom supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs. Students are working on significantly modified curriculum expectations and programming is supplemented with functional skill development. In the program, students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic supports through individualized programming, and receive intensive support for physical needs as required. This program is taught by a special education teacher in collaboration with classroom educational assistant/s.

### **Specialized School to Community Program**

This low enrolment classroom supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs at the secondary level. Students may be working on modified Ontario Curriculum expectations and programming is supplemented with functional and vocational skill development as needed. In this program students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic supports through individualized programming, and receive support for intensive physical needs as required. Transition to the community is an integral part of the program, with a focus on building connections to community supports as students approach graduation.

### **Elementary Gifted Program**

The students in the program demonstrate an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth best serviced in the Part-Time Gifted Program to allow them to reach their educational potential. Students in the program will have an Individual Education Plan that outlines the Alternative Expectations that the student will be completing, in the area of Higher Order Thinking Skills.



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**CRITERIA FOR ASSIGNING EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT SUPPORT TO CLASSES**

The District School Board of Niagara determines access to support if the student demonstrates moderate, severe or profound physical, behavioural, communication and/or developmental needs and requires assistance to ensure the health and safety of self or others.

The Board's Educational Assistant Allocation and Placement Committee meets throughout the year to review student/school needs and determines the Educational Assistant assignments for the next school year. This committee includes Principal representatives as well as system-based staff who are knowledgeable about the students with special education needs within their complement of schools. A review of allocation occurs in September, taking into consideration student moves that have happened throughout the summer.

**CRITERIA USED FOR DETERMINING NEED TO CHANGE A STUDENT'S PLACEMENT**

- In-School Team reviews the strategies outlined in the student's IEP based on current assessment data;
- Accommodations and/or Modifications as outlined in the student's IEP are adjusted as necessary;
- Parents/guardians are key players in the decision making process regarding their child's program;
- Consideration is given to the appropriateness of the current placement by school, parent/guardian and central special education staff;
- Change, if required, is made in placement through the IPRC process.

When the full range of placement options of the Board has been exhausted, the Board in consultation with parents/guardians, will explore Provincial and Demonstration Schools, the transitional options of home instruction or placement in a Section 23 Care/Treatment Facility, as available. The Board will support the parents/guardians in advocating for a program within Care and Treatment facilities available in the area.

The Board may provide parents/guardians with all available information regarding community agencies.

Consultation with the parents/guardians will be through the IPRC process as well as case conferences.

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**INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEPs)**

An Individual Education Plan is a written plan that outlines programming for a student with special education needs. An IEP defines a student's strengths and needs, identifying accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum or alternative expectations that make up a student's program. The IEP is a working document and as such, revisions and updates are to be expected. Parental input is sought in the development of the IEP and parents are informed about any changes to the IEP throughout the school year. A copy of the IEP is kept in your child's Ontario School Record (OSR).

All students identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) must have an IEP. Students who have not been identified as exceptional but are working with accommodations, or on modified or alternative curriculum will also have an IEP put in place.

Should a parent have questions or concerns about their child's progress, or programming the following steps are suggested:

- The parent/guardian is requested to write down any questions or concerns regarding the IEP.
- The teacher with primary responsibility for the development of the IEP (elementary teacher(s) or secondary SERT) will arrange a time to meet with you to review your concerns or questions. Agreed upon changes can be made and a copy of the revised IEP sent home.
- Should any questions and/or concerns remain unanswered, a second meeting may be arranged to include the school Principal or Vice-Principal. The Administration can assist in answering your questions, and will work with you to best serve your child.



## DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

## Individual Education Plan

## Reason for IEP Development

☐ Student identified as exceptional by IPRC

☐ Student not formally identified but requires Special Education services that include modifications or alternative learning expectations and/or accommodations

## Student Profile

Student Name:

Special Ed File No.

School Year:

Gender:

O.E.N.

Current Grade:

D.O.B.:

Semester/Term:

Home phone

Address

Contact/Guardian

Home Phone

Business Phone

School:

School Phone:

Principal:

Initial IPRC Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Date Annual Review Dispensed With (mm/dd/yyyy)

Most Recent IPRC Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Exceptionality

Placement

Program

## Assessment Data

Assessment (List relevant assessments)	Date	Summary of results

## Student Strengths and Needs

Areas of Strength	Areas of Need

## Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

### Program Supports / Services

Individualized Equipment ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Specialized Health Support Services ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resource Support	Date of Service Initiation	Duration & Frequency of Service	Location of Service

### Subjects, Courses or Alternative Programs to which IEP applies

Subject	Accommodated only	Modified	Alternative Program
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Elementary Program Exemption(s) or Secondary Compulsory Course Substitution(s) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, specify program(s) or course(s) and substitution(s) and provide educational rationale \_\_\_\_\_

Complete for secondary students only:

**Student Name is currently working toward the attainment of the:**

- ☐ Ontario Secondary School Diploma
- ☐ Ontario Secondary School Certificate
- ☐ Certificate of Accomplishment

### Evaluation

Reporting Format: ☐ Provincial Report Card ☐ Alternative Report Card

Reporting Date (mm/dd/yyyy): \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 4

(Assume accommodations apply to all subjects unless otherwise indicated)

EQAO

**Accommodations:** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**For Secondary:** ☐ Grade 9 Math ☐ OSSLT

☐ IPRC ☐ Provincial Report Card

☐ Previous IEP ☐ Parent/Guardian

☐ Student ☐ Other (list below)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Section 4****INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)****Modified or Alternative Program**

Subject/Course/Alternative Program: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Current Level Of Achievement for Modified Program</b> Prerequisite course (if applicable)  Curriculum Grade Level Letter Grade/Mark (from most recent report card)	<b>Current Level of Achievement for Alternative Program (describe)</b>
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Annual Program Goal:

Term/Semester	Learning Expectations (Knowledge and/or skills to be assessed by reporting period, includes grade level)	Teaching Strategies (Strategies that are different for this student and identified learning expectations)	Assessment Methods

## Section 4 INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLANS (IEP)

### Consultation and Planning

<b>Parent/Guardian/Student (if 16 years or older)</b>		
• Were you consulted in the development of the IEP?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
• Did you decline the opportunity to be consulted?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
• Have you received a copy of the IEP?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Comments:</b>		
<b>Parent Signature:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____	
<b>Student Signature:</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____	

### Log Of Consultation and Staff Review/Updating

Date	Activity	Outcome

### Transition Plan

Action	Responsibilities	Timeline

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**SCHOOL BASED STAFF**

The allocation of Special Education Staff is reviewed each year and allocated based on student needs.

**Learning Resource Teacher (LRT)**

The role of the Learning Resource Teacher (LRT) is to support students achieving success by providing resource assistance (in-class), withdrawal support and/or indirect service to exceptional and at-risk students in a collaborative manner. This school-based special educator is placed in elementary schools under the direct supervision of the Principal.

**Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT)**

The SERT provides in-class, withdrawal support and/or indirect service to exceptional and at-risk students. The SERT is a resource to classroom teachers and is able to work with parents/guardians in a pro-active manner. This school-based special educator is placed in secondary schools under the direct supervision of the Principal.

**Educational Assistant (EA)**

Educational Assistants are assigned to schools that have special classes and to schools where there are students who require intensive support in regular classrooms. EAs support students with specified physical needs including visual, auditory, ambulatory and personal care. Students exhibiting severe behavioural needs may also receive EA support to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Educational Assistants are under the supervision of the Principal and receive direction from the classroom teacher.

**Braillist/Transcriber**

The Braillist/Transcriber is a member of a multi-disciplinary resource team reporting to the Student Achievement Leader – Special Education, and works closely with the Resource Teacher - Blind and Low Vision, and in consultation with a specialist teacher of the blind or deaf-blind.

**Interpreter**

The role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication between students who are deaf or hard of hearing and others within the educational environment. In addition, the Interpreter functions as an integral part of the educational team by commenting on the interpreting process. The interpreter works under the supervision of the school Principal and in consultation with a qualified teacher of the deaf.



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**SCHOOL SUPPORT SERVICES STAFF****Superintendent of School Support Services**

The Superintendent of School Support Services is responsible for the supervision of Special Education service delivery and support and reports directly to the Director of Education.

**Student Achievement Leader – Special Education**

The Student Achievement Leader - Special Education is responsible for the co-ordination and supervision of Special Education staff and student supports and reports directly to the Superintendent of School Support Services.

**Consultant – Special Education**

The Consultant – Special Education's duties consist of advising and assisting superintendents, principals, teachers, DECEs, educational assistants, and parents/guardians in matters related to Special Education programs and services. The Consultant – Special Education is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

**Co-ordinator – Special Education**

Manages, facilitates and co-ordinates system resources that support the needs of students, while also liaising with community agencies and vendors to facilitate student transitions. The Co-ordinator is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

**Resource Teacher – Special Education**

The Resource Teacher – Special Education provides program strategies or suggestions, resources and services to meet the needs of students requiring accommodation/modification of program within classrooms for students with Blind and Low Vision needs, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing needs. Some Resource Teachers are responsible for supporting an area of schools while others support specific exceptionalities.

The Resource Teacher – Special Education is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

**Educational Assistant – System**

The Educational Assistant – System provides resources and supports for programming in schools. They also may assist with Special Education processes and projects as required. The Educational Assistant - System reports directly to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education.

**Chief Psychologist**

The Chief Psychologist reports to the Superintendent of School Support Services. The Chief Psychologist assumes responsibility for monitoring and maintaining the system of psychological services delivery and provides resource support to Special Education, as assigned.

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**Education Assistant – Technology**

The Education Assistant – Technology assists with the development, training and support for staff and students in the use of various software and assistive technologies to enhance learning outcomes.

**Psycho-Educational Consultant**

The Psycho-Educational Consultant provides services of a psychological nature under the supervision of a Member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario and participates in a multi-disciplinary team to problem-solve Special Education issues and the needs of individual students. The Psycho-Education Consultant is responsible to the Chief Psychologist for the performance of assigned duties.

**Speech Language Pathologist**

The Speech-Language Pathologist assesses and provides ongoing support for the speech and language needs of students. The Speech-Language Pathologist is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

**Occupational Therapist**

The Occupational Therapist (OT) is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education and is a regulated health professional who assesses and provides recommendations and strategies regarding fine motor skills, sensory processing skills, visual perception and organizational skills necessary for success in the classroom.

**Social Worker**

Social Workers are responsible to the Chief Psychologist and are members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team to assist schools in programming for students with significant emotional, behavioural or mental health issues and cultural issues.

**ABA Facilitator**

Works with principals, teachers and multi-disciplinary transition teams by providing and co-ordinating Applied Behaviour Analysis instructional methods and resources at the board and school level. The ABA Facilitator is responsible to the Student Achievement Leader - Special Education for the performance of assigned duties.

**Educational Audiologist**

DSBN contracts the services of an Educational Audiologist who works collaboratively with the Resource Teachers - Deaf and Hard of Hearing to support the needs of students within the system.

### SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

The District School Board of Niagara allocates funding for the purchase of specialized equipment required by students.

Examples of Specialized Equipment:

- Therapy equipment (e.g. therapy balls, wedges, rolls, etc.)
- Sensory equipment (e.g. weighted vests, lap pads, etc.)
- Fine motor equipment (e.g. slant boards, pencil grips, etc.)

### Criteria for Student Eligibility

Generally, a therapist makes a request for specialized equipment based on specific student needs. Requests are reviewed by Special Education Staff in consultation with the school principal.

### Tracking Specialized Equipment

There is a central database used to track equipment assigned to meet student needs. When students move, or needs change, equipment may be transferred or reallocated.

### SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AMOUNT (SEA) CLAIMS

The Ministry of Education provides Special Equipment Amount funding to assist school boards with the cost of essential equipment required to support students with special needs to access the Ontario curriculum or board determined program or to attend school. All equipment must be deemed essential and be recommended by a qualified professional.

Examples of SEA Funded equipment:

- FM systems
- sensory equipment
- change tables
- ceiling lifts/portable lifts
- print enlargers
- amplification systems
- adaptive seating and work stations
- braille writers
- positioning devices
- computer hardware and specialized software
- warranties, service contracts, training associated with specific equipment

### Criteria for Student Eligibility

A SEA Claim for equipment requires the following documentation:

- an assessment or assessments on file from an appropriately qualified professional such as a psychologist, audiologist, occupational therapist or physiotherapist. The assessment must include a diagnosis of the condition that the equipment is meant to address and a recommendation regarding the specific types of equipment that the student requires to address their needs. The assessment must indicate that the equipment is essential to support the student. In some cases, more than one professional may need to be consulted;
- evidence of proof of purchase, such as a copy of any purchase orders and invoices;
- a current copy of the student's Individual Education Plan indicating the use of the equipment to support the student's program.

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### Tracking SEA Claims

A letter detailing the SEA equipment is emailed to the principal and placed in the student's OSR. The District School Board of Niagara maintains a database that provides a detailed inventory of existing equipment. When a student graduates, or it is deemed that the equipment that is no longer of benefit to the student, SEA funded equipment will be reallocated within DSBN.

### SEA Portability

Equipment purchased through SEA funding is considered to be portable which means that it should be transferred when the student changes schools or moves to a different school board within Ontario. Equipment acquired through a "shared claim" does not always move to a new location with the student. The sending board will not be reimbursed by the Ministry, since the equipment was purchased on behalf of the student based on his/her needs. It is the responsibility of School Support Services to contact the previous board to request the transfer of equipment and will incur any shipping or handling costs associated with the transfer of equipment.

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Niagara Student Transportation Services (NSTS) is a consortium that services the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) and the Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB). The mandate of NSTS is to provide safe, efficient and effective student transportation services.

In accordance with the Education Act, school boards may provide home-to-school or school-to-school transportation to students who are within the Board's jurisdiction or control. In all cases (other than those situations specified in the Education Act), transportation is a privilege, not a right, and it may be withdrawn at any time.

The approved Board student transportation policy sets the eligibility criteria and students may be provided transportation on the basis of distance, hazardous walking routes or approved program attendance. Transportation may also be provided to students with exceptional needs with the approval from the authorized department.

NSTS applies the Board approved transportation policy and plans and administers service using contracted school buses, taxis or through a Public Transit Commission. The School Support Services' Department in consultation with the parent/guardian, school/site and NSTS will determine if a student is eligible for transportation due to exceptional needs and defines the specific transportation requirement to maintain the safety of all students.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that the school is aware of any health condition that may require immediate medical attention. The school provides this information for inclusion on the bus route copy so that the bus driver can respond accordingly in urgent situations.

In situations where a student does not qualify for transportation under the policy eligibility criteria, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student gets to and from school safely.

Information regarding students' specific transportation arrangements is available at [www.nsts.ca](http://www.nsts.ca).

## Section 8 TRANSITION PLANNING

The transition from school to work, further education, and community living can be particularly challenging for some students. The probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when schools work with parents/guardians, employers, community agencies, and providers of further education to develop coordinated transition plans for exceptional students. (*Transition Planning: A Resource Guide 2002*) Transition plans can include a variety of supports and may take place for different reasons. (e.g., school change, classroom change, transitions during school, staff changes). Policy Program Memorandum 156 was recently implemented by the Ministry of Education, which will require that a transition plan be implemented for all students with an Individual Education Plan— both exceptional and non-exceptional.

Some examples of effective transition practices in the District School Board of Niagara include, but are not limited to:

**Preschool Transition Process** – DSBN staff work with local Preschool Resource Consultants and various community agencies to ensure preschoolers with educational needs enter DSBN schools successfully. Developing transition plans, sharing information and providing support to families new to DSBN are key components to the Preschool Transition Process

**Transition for Students with Autism** – Many individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) have difficulty coping with novel and unexpected events or transitioning between activities and environments, leading to anxiety or unusual inappropriate behaviours. Appropriate planning for transition is vital in helping a student with ASD to prepare for and adjust for changes, and should begin well in advance of the expected change for the student. In the DSBN, transition plans are included in the student's IEP and can include school to school, classroom to classroom and activity to activity.

**Connections for Students** – Students transitioning out of the Autism Intervention Program or Intensive Behavioural Intervention are supported throughout the planning stage, returning to school and following to ensure they experience success as they enter DSBN schools.

**Grade 8 to Grade 9 Transition** – A transition form is completed for every student entering grade 9. This information is shared with the receiving school staff to ensure that the learning strengths and needs of each student are considered before the student even starts secondary school. For students identified as Exceptional with special education needs, a transition plan is developed as part of the individual education plan and transition meetings are held with staff from both the elementary and secondary school.

**Transition for Students who are Deaf and/or Hard of Hearing** – DSBN Resource Teachers – Deaf and Hard of Hearing, work collaboratively with the Infant Hearing Program, service agencies such as Speech Services Niagara (SSN), VOICE Auditory Verbal Therapists, American Sign Language Consultants and the Provincial Schools for the Deaf – Home Visiting Teachers to ensure a smooth transition to a school within the DSBN, and establish program goals for students.

**Integrated Transition Planning for Young People with Developmental Disabilities (TAY Protocol)** - The DSBN works closely with other community agencies and other Ministries to ensure that proper transition planning takes place for students with developmental disabilities. At age 14, students will be offered an Integrated Transition Planning Process that the school will facilitate to assist families and students in planning longer term for transition to community opportunities. Through this process the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and The Ministry of Education (MOE) are working together to provide a more streamlined integrated transition planning process to support young people who are preparing for transition to adulthood.

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Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are an essential part of delivering special education programs and services. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below.

### **The Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education:

- sets out, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services;
- prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- requires that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils;
- establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants;
- requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the ministry;
- requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs);
- establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents/guardians and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils;
- establishes a provincial Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services;
- operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

### **The District School Board**

The District School Board:

- establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board;
- reports on the expenditures for special education;
- develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board;
- reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- provides statistical reports to the ministry as required;
- prepares a parent guide to provide parents/guardians with information about special education programs, services, and procedures;
- establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them;
- establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee;
- provides professional development to staff on special education.

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### **The Special Education Advisory Committee**

The Special Education Advisory Committee:

- makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board;
- participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan;
- participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education;
- reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education;
- provides information to parents/guardians, as requested.

### **The School Administrator**

The School Administrator:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda, and through board policies;
- communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach special education classes;
- communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents/guardians;
- ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- consults with parents and school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils;
- ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including the transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- ensures that parents/guardians are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP;
- ensures that appropriate assessments are requested and that, if necessary, consent is obtained.

### **The Teacher**

The Teacher:

- carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents/guardians to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil;
- provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the regular class, as outlined in the IEP;
- communicates the student's progress to parents/guardians;
- works with parent/guardian and other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.



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**The Special Education Teacher**

The Special Education Teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under “The Teacher”:

- holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education;
- monitors the student’s progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

**The Parent/Guardian**

The Parent/Guardian:

- becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities;
- participates in the development of the IEP;
- becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student;
- supports the student at home;
- works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems;
- is responsible for the student’s attendance at school.

**The Student**

The Student:

- complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy documents, including policy/program memoranda;
- complies with board policies and procedures;
- participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

The following five categories of exceptionalities have been identified in the Education Act definition of *exceptional pupil*:

- behaviour
- communication
- intellectual
- physical
- multiple

These broad categories include the following definitions, as clarified in the memo to school boards of January 15, 1999:

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Behaviour</b>	
<b>Behaviour</b>	<p>A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;</li> <li>b) excessive fears or anxieties;</li> <li>c) a tendency to compulsive reaction;</li> <li>d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Autism</b>	<p>A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) disturbances in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– rate of educational development;</li> <li>– ability to relate to the environment;</li> <li>– mobility;</li> <li>– perception, speech, and language;</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.</li> </ul>
<b>Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing</b>	<p>An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.</p>

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Language Impairment</b>	<p>A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and</li> <li>b) include one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– language delay;</li> <li>– dysfluency;</li> <li>– voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Speech Impairment</b>	<p>A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.</p>
<b>Learning Disability</b>	<p>One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range;</li> <li>- results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;</li> <li>- results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;</li> <li>- may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; executive functions (e.g. self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);</li> <li>- may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;</li> <li>- is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.</li> </ul>

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Intellectual</b>	
<b>Giftedness</b>	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
<b>Mild Intellectual Disability</b>	A learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;</li> <li>b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;</li> <li>c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</li> </ul>
<b>Developmental Disability</b>	A severe learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;</li> <li>b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;</li> <li>c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	
<b>Physical Disability</b>	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
<b>Blind and Low Vision</b>	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
<b>Multiple</b>	
<b>Multiple Exceptionalities</b>	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

**Provincial schools** are operated by the Ministry of Education and Training to:

- provide an alternative education option for students for whom local provision is not made;
- serve as a regional resource for deaf, blind and deaf/blind students;
- provide pre-school home visiting services for deaf and deaf/blind students;
- develop and provide learning materials and media for deaf, blind and deaf/blind students.

#### **Provincial Schools Branch**

255 Ontario Street South  
Milton, ON L9T 2M5  
Phone: 905-878-2851

#### **SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

##### **W. Ross Macdonald School**

350 Brant Ave  
Brantford, ON N3T 3J9  
Tel: (519) 759-0730

- Provides education for blind, visually impaired and deaf/blind students.
- Curriculum consistent with Ontario Curriculum.
- Full range of courses (elementary and secondary).
- Comprehensive life skills programs.
- Students transported weekly.
- Pre-school visiting program.

##### **Resource Support**

- Provides consultation and special learning materials (i.e., braille, large print).

#### **SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF**

##### **Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf** (Belleville - serves Eastern Ontario)

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, Ontario K8P 1B2, Phone: (613) 967-2823

##### **Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf** (Milton - serves Central and Northern Ontario)

255 Ontario Street South, Milton, Ontario L9T 2M5, Phone: (905) 878-2851

##### **Robarts School for the Deaf** (London - serves Western Ontario)

1090 Highbury Avenue, London, Ontario N5Y 4V9, Phone: (519) 453-4400

##### **Centres Jules-Leger** (Ottawa - serves Francophone students)

281 Lanark Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1Z 6R8, Phone: (613) 761-9300

- Elementary and secondary school programs.
- Focus on language acquisition, learning and social development through American Sign Language (A.S.L.)
- Students transported weekly.
- Curriculum-Ontario Curriculum.
- Pre-school visiting program.

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**Resource Support**

- Provides consultation including information brochures and workshops.

Transportation to Provincial and Demonstration Schools is provided by the Board from which the student comes. The District School Board of Niagara provides transportation for our students who attend one of these schools.

Teachers may obtain additional information from the Resource Services Departments of the Provincial Schools and the groups listed below.

**Amethyst Demonstration School**

1090 Highbury Avenue, London, ON, Phone: (519) 453-4400

**Trillium Demonstration School**

347 Ontario St South, Milton, ON L9T 3X9, Phone: (905) 878-2851

**Sagonaska Demonstration School**

350 Dundas Street West, Belleville, ON, Phone: (613) 967-2830

The Ministry of Education and Training provides the services of three English language provincial demonstration schools for Ontario children with severe learning disabilities. Application for admission to a provincial demonstration school is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parent/guardian consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission. Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time. The demonstration schools were established to provide special residential education programs for students between the ages of five and twenty-one years. The activities associated with the residential components of the programs are designed to enhance the development of each student's academic and social skills. One of the basic objectives of each of these schools is to develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to return to programs operated by local school boards within two years.

In addition to providing residential schooling for students with severe learning disabilities, the provincial demonstration schools have special programs for students with severe learning disabilities in association with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These are highly intensive, one-year programs. The Trillium School also operates Learning for Emotional and Academic Development (LEAD), a special program for students with severe learning disabilities who require an additional level of social/emotional support. Further information about the academic, residential, LEAD, and LD/ADHD programs is available from the Demonstration Schools through the Special Needs Opportunity Window (SNOW) website at <http://snow.utoronto.ca>.

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) believes that early identification procedures and intervention strategies are a very important aspect of the overall programming for students. All students upon entering the DSBN will participate in the early identification process. Consultation with parents/guardians begins at or before the child enrolls in the DSBN and will continue throughout the student's school life. Therefore, the DSBN has put in place procedures for early identification, continuous review, and interventions that are in partnership with parents/guardians.

### THE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA, EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

**Principles for Early Identification:** (Note: The six items reflect and parallel the six principles set out in the Ministry Memorandum 11 and reflect the DSBN's beliefs.)

1. The ability to communicate effectively is important for school success. Reading and writing are strongly influenced by the ability to understand and use language. Language is not just another subject. It is the means by which all other subjects are pursued. Also, research indicates that early childhood is a critical or sensitive period during which emerging language problems can most readily be resolved. Therefore, early identification and support for students whose language skills are delayed or disordered is critical.
2. Parent-School Partnership is key. Consultation and collaboration with the parents/guardians begins during the process of enrolling in the DSBN and continues throughout the student's school life. Parent/guardian questionnaires and discussions at enrollment for all students, as well as formal transition procedures for students entering school with known special needs, establish an early connection which is on-going. Students entering school with known special education needs often enter with the support of the Pre-School Transition Process – see Section 8, Transition Planning pg. 24.
3. Screening is a non-intrusive process, which involves a variety of strategies to ensure that important learning needs of all students entering the DSBN have been systematically considered. Areas for screening reflect key aspects of emotional, social, intellectual, and/or physical development. Screening maintains the comfort of the child, respects the importance of teaching/learning time in the classroom, and facilitates timely interventions. The Functional Screening and Strategies for Kindergarten Success is one tool available to schools to support Early Learning.
4. Continuous assessment from different perspectives, as appropriate, produces a profile of the learner to assist with planning interventions and curriculum adaptations that support student success. Assessment is continuous and the established partnership between regular and special education facilitates meeting the needs of individual students and co-ordinating the educational practices within regular education and special education programs. (For further information see Section 2 – Educational and Other Assessments, pg. 37)
5. Screening selects students for further curriculum-based assessment, increased frequency of school-parent communication, and consultation/assessment by appropriately qualified and certified/licensed professionals. These students receive on-going monitoring, assessment, and intervention to meet the changing needs of the student. Screening is never the basis for long-term prediction or comprehensive planning.
6. The classroom teacher is the key school staff member in screening and selection of students for early assessment, intervention, and monitoring. The teacher is assisted by a number of resources in curriculum and special education, including a comprehensive plan for system assessment.

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**Process**

Early Identification is a process for screening all students and selecting those students who may be at-risk of not experiencing success in school, including some students who may require further special education supports in the future. The process targets key developmental issues to be observed in order to quickly select those students who require timely and relevant curriculum-based assessment in order to establish intervention strategies. A variety of assessment tools are used in every classroom, please refer to Section 2 – Educational and Other Assessments, pg. 38 for further information.

- Step one: Use assessment tools to determine students who may be at risk. These screening procedures indicate skill deficits in issues which are at a developmentally critical period of development or are key to establishing school success. They do not provide a full learning profile.
- Step two: Teacher continues the regular curriculum-based assessment and teaching practices, while supplementing this for students with parent-teacher communication, planned strategic observation of the student, and discussions with school resources, such as the In-School Team, Literacy Team, Instructional Coaches, and Principal. PRIME, PM Benchmark, DRA and Leveled Literacy are some of the classroom assessment tools used to support programming decisions.
- Step three: An Informal intervention plan is implemented at home and school, with on-going monitoring and continuous revision, as needed.
- Step four: Teacher communication with the parent/guardian and the In-School Team facilitates on-going revision to meet changing needs and establishes a basis for timely access to specialized, certified/licensed professionals. An Individual Education Plan may be suggested to support the learning needs of non-exceptional learners, to support early intervention and strategies.
- Step five: Variations of steps two through five are on-going until the student is able to succeed with regular classroom assessment and teaching or the student enters the special education processes of formal assessment, identification, and programming.

**EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS IN NEED OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES AT SCHOOL ENTRY**

The District School Board of Niagara recognizes the importance of the first contact parents/guardians have with the school system. Therefore, every Principal is expected to meet the Board's obligation not only to enroll all children who have the right to attend; but to welcome those who may have special education needs. Once the child with special education needs has been registered, the school and parents/guardians will work with the School Support Services Special Education resource staff to collect and review information related to the child's needs and a plan for school entry will be developed. This is often done through the Preschool Transition Process explained further in Section 8, pg 24.

Strong partnerships exist with agencies serving pre-school children with special education needs. Discussions held long before the child comes to school help identify strengths and needs that can be planned for during transition.



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**IN-SCHOOL TEAM (IST)**

The District School Board of Niagara expects that an In-School Team (IST) will be established for each school within the Board, in accordance with its Policy: Framework for the Provision of Special Education Services and Administrative Procedure In-School Team 4-9.

The In-School Team is regarded to be a formalized, ongoing problem-solving forum. The IST develops and reviews plans designed to enable students who are experiencing difficulty in their learning environment. In Elementary it is referred to as In-School Team. In Secondary it is referred to as In-School Student Success Team to reinforce the collaboration among student success and guidance resources.

The following expectations are to be met when establishing an In-School Team:

**MEMBERSHIP**

Core membership on the team should include:

- Administrator
- LRT/SERT
- Case Presenter(s) - normally a classroom teacher
- Guidance Counsellor (secondary)
- Student Success Teacher

To add support to the problem solving process, additional participants could include:

- Classroom Teacher (Secondary)
- Classroom Teachers other than Homeroom or Subject Teachers
- Educational Assistant
- Elementary Divisional Leader
- Secondary Program Leaders
- School Support Services – Special Education Resource Staff
- Student (if appropriate)
- Social Worker and/or Youth Counselor

**INPUT**

Input may be invited in written form or through discussions/meetings/case conferences from:

- Student (if appropriate)
- Parents/guardians
- Agency representative

**TIME**

In-School Team meetings must be:

- regularly scheduled (recommended weekly). Additional meetings may be called on short notice, if necessary, to meet emerging needs or special circumstances;
- scheduled at a time that will facilitate the attendance of all members involved;
- time limited and student specific.

DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA  
IN-SCHOOL TEAM REFERRAL

Date of Referral: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B. \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Presenting Problem: \_\_\_\_\_

INFORMATION GATHERING	DATE(S)	DISCUSSION/ACTION REQUIRED
Pertinent information from OSR (i.e., assessments, previous report cards, student information forms, etc.)		
Contact(s) with parents/guardians		
Review of previous medical history with parent, guardian, OSR, or other sources		
Discussion with previous teachers		
Consultation with LRT/SERT		
Consultation with Division Leader/ Department Head		
Outside Agency Involvement		
Other Sources		

School Board personnel administering specialized assessment work within the standards and ethical practice guidelines established by their respective Colleges. They are governed by the *Education Act* and the *Regulated Health Professions Act*, and must comply with the *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*.

Assessments provide a framework for educational programming purposes and may involve any combination of the following:

- formalized standardized tests;
- informal measures such as observation;
- curriculum/classroom-based assessment;
- review of the Ontario Student Record (OSR);
- interviews with teachers, parents/guardians, or other professionals.

### Protection of Privacy of Information

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed that information obtained from assessments is maintained in accordance with the requirements of the College of Psychologists, the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario, CASLPO or the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario plus the *Municipal Freedom of Information and the Protection of Privacy Act*. A separate consent form, *Consent to Disclose Information Form* must be signed by the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to share information with outside agencies.

### LITERACY/NUMERACY ASSESSMENT

Assessment informs and directs instruction. The results obtained from the assessment of essential literacy and numeracy skills and concepts will enable teachers to provide both a profile of student growth and development, and responsive programs to meet the needs of all learners. Classroom-based literacy and numeracy assessment is maintained for each student in elementary school. A literacy portfolio may contain assessments such as, Benchmark Assessment of Reading (BAS), Comprehension Attitude Strategies Interests (CASI), and the Ontario Writing Assessment (OWA). PRIME is an example of a classroom based numeracy assessment that may be used for some students.

### ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT

Alternative Assessment tools such as the Brigance, the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) and Hawaii Early Learning Profile (HELP) are commercially produced assessment resources that both schools and central staff may use for determining student strengths, needs and the next steps needed to ensure program goals are measurable and student achievement is improving.

### SPEECH-LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Speech-Language assessments assist teachers in understanding the oral language and social communication needs of students, and the interrelationships between listening, speaking, reading and writing. A student may be referred for a Speech-Language assessment through the In-School Team if there are any questions concerning a student's ability to: follow directions, participate in classroom conversations, understand and retell stories, socialize with peers, organize ideas sequentially, speak on topic, use appropriate vocabulary, word order and grammar, speak clearly and fluently, and learn sound skills necessary to read and write.

The assessment may:

- provide a Speech-Language Pathologist's opinion about the student's communicative ability;
- determine the existence and severity of the communication difficulty as related to language learning, literacy development, behaviour and general ability to participate in the classroom program;
- support teachers in developing appropriate language and social communication strategies for Individual Education Plan (IEPs);
- assist in determining appropriate placement and/or referral to an outside agency;
- provide support for additional assessment.

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**SPEECH ASSESSMENTS**

When a student [J.K. (after November 1, 2015) – Gr. 12] demonstrates difficulties specific to the area of speech (i.e., concerns evident with regard to articulation, voice and/or fluency in the presence of age appropriate oral language skills), an in-depth assessment may not be necessary. A speech assessment with the Speech-Language Pathologist may be requested by any school staff or any parent or legal guardian through the Learning Resource/Special Education Resource Teacher.

- Although a written consent is not required, the LRT/SERT must obtain verbal consent and complete the Informed Consent for Speech and/or Language Services. The original form is filed in the OSR and a copy sent home.
- Following assessment, parent(s)/legal guardian(s) will receive a Speech Evaluation Report. Copies will be placed in the OSR and Speech-Language File. Strategies for home and school programming may be provided.
- Students with articulation, voice and/or fluency concerns who would benefit from direct speech therapy according to established criteria may be referred to Community Care Access Centre/ School Health Support Services (CCAC/SHSS). The application form must be completed at the school, signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and School Principal, and then forwarded to School Support Services-Special Education Department. The application is then forwarded to CCAC offices.

CCAC offers direct therapy to students, as per their needs and established criteria, either individually in their home school during school hours or in group sessions at pre-selected community schools.

**PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

Psychological assessments provide information about a student's cognitive, academic, social, emotional and behavioural functioning in order to facilitate learning. Various intellectual tests, and other tests of cognitive and psychological processing, and tests of social, emotional or behavioural functioning are utilized in conjunction with a review of the Ontario Student Record (OSR), observations, and interviews with the student and individuals involved with the pupil's education. This type of assessment applies a psychological framework regarding a student's development and learning in order to assist with program planning.

The psychological assessment may:

- determine the existence and severity of the learning and/or behavioural difficulty of a student;
- support teachers in developing appropriate learning and behavioural strategies for Individual Education Plans (IEPs);
- assist Identification, Placement and Review Committees (IPRC) with identification and programming decisions for students.

A copy of all Psychological and Speech/Language Assessments will be kept in the student's Ontario Student Record. Students and parents have access to the Ontario Student record for the purposes of examination. Parents and students over the age of 18 can request that documents be removed from the Ontario Student Record as needed.

The District School Board of Niagara has strong working relationships with a variety of community partners representing agencies and ministries beyond the education sector. These relationships support students by assisting school staff members, the staff of School Support Services - Special Education, and parents/guardians plan for smooth transitions for students entering the school system, returning to the school system, or for students within the school system and beyond that require additional supports and resources.

#### **LINKS WITH SERVICE AGENCIES/MINISTRIES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

The District School Board of Niagara has a variety of community partners. The Special Education department enjoys active relationships with the following agencies and ministries:

#### **FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES**

FACS provides a wide range of services to support children, adolescents and families. Nursery School/Early Learning Centre's and Parenting Centre's, as well as the Family Counseling Centre are some of the services offered.

FACS is mandated by the Child and Family Services Act to investigate the abuse and neglect of children and to provide protection, foster care and adoption services.

The DSBN partners with Family and Children Services and other Children's Aid Societies to provide Section 23 classrooms for students who are in Care and Treatment Facilities. These Section 23 classrooms are listed below:

**Family and Children Services** (Niagara) – Stepping Stones, Welland (Eastdale Secondary School Site)

**Hatts Off** - Grimsby

**Little House** – Smithville (Gainsborough Elementary School Site)

**Mutual Support Systems** - Port Colborne (Port Colborne High School Site)

**Youth Connections** – Allenburg (Allenburg Community Centre Site)

The Superintendent of School Support Services and the Student Achievement Leader of Section 23 Classrooms work collaboratively to facilitate the transition of students into the DSBN.

#### **SPEECH SERVICES NIAGARA (SSN), Pre-school Speech & Language Service System of Niagara**

Children who are 4 years of age and under and experiencing speech and language difficulties may be referred by their parents/guardians, physicians or other professionals directly to Speech Services Niagara (SSN). The DSBN and Speech Services Niagara work diligently to enhance transition procedures. A DSBN Speech-Language Pathologist sits on the Advisory Board of S.S.N., as well as various other adhoc committees, such as the Transition to School Committees. Each year in early September, a transition meeting is scheduled with the DSBN to ensure that we are planning for student success. The purpose of this meeting is to share information about students whose service will be transferred from SSN to Community Care Access Centre (CCAC), Children's Health Services and/or the DSBN.

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**NIAGARA CHILDREN'S CENTRE - SCHOOL AGED SERVICES AND CLINICS**

We provide treatment, therapy and communication programs to school aged children so that they can accomplish functional and meaningful outcomes to enhance quality of life, achieve individual potential and participate fully in life at home, school and in the community. We are caring staff that have expertise in pediatric rehabilitation. Our facility has large treatment gyms, quiet treatment rooms, therapy pool and specialized equipment.

School aged interventions are not intended to be continuous. Children who have lifelong need for management of physical disabilities are given episodic care when they experience physical change and/or equipment alterations. Equipment includes customized seating systems and mobility devices. Orthopedic management is provided through a range of service, including medical consultations casting, splinting and gait analysis. Home programming is an integral part of this service.

Children with acquired conditions and changing conditions are seen for assessment, brief intervention and transition to community partners. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech language pathology, social work and a developmental pediatrics team work together with the family and child.

Children who cannot talk or whose speech is very difficult to understand receive augmentative and alternative communication assessment and intervention. Children with physical disabilities who cannot write using pen and paper are provided with specialized equipment for written communication.

We provide individualized therapy assessment and intervention, within group settings for children who attend the NCC School.

**NIAGARA CHILDREN'S CENTRE - SCHOOL PROGRAM**

As a centre of excellence, NCC School provides individualized education programming in group settings to children 4-21 years of age with multiple learning exceptionalities.

Specialist teachers, therapists and other professionals utilize a family-centred approach to building student success in literacy, numeracy, augmentative and alternative communication for learning.

Adapted movement, aquatics, art and music are utilized to assist students in developing the self-esteem necessary to successfully engage in lifelong learning and communication.

NCC School is not designed to be a permanent educational environment for students. Central to our design is the successful transition of students to community school environments with replicable teaching strategies for participation in learning. Integration of our students to community school environments is achieved by collaborating and working alongside the educational staff of the District School Board of Niagara.

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**CONTACT NIAGARA**

Contact Niagara was created in 1999 in order to provide parents/guardians with a single point access to a wide variety of services within the Niagara Region. Contact Niagara provides information and connects people to services for children experiencing emotional and/or behavioural difficulties and people of all ages who have developmental disability. Contact Niagara is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services. Resource co-ordinators at Contact Niagara help individuals to understand the services available and guides them through an interview process to identify and connect them with the services they want or need. The following agencies are accessed through Contact Niagara (905-684-3407, 1-800-933-3617). The DSBN works closely the following individual agencies, as well as with Contact Niagara.

**Association for Community Living / Niagara Support Services**

These agencies provide a variety of services for individuals of all ages with developmental disabilities. Child Care and Nursery School programs for pre-school aged children (2.5 to 6 years of age) are provided for children with special needs in an inclusive setting. The Association for Community Living and Niagara Support Services provide parent-directed services that support the child with special needs and his or her family. The DSBN has developed a framework to transition students supported by these agencies from various pre-school settings to schools within DSBN.

**Pathstone Mental Health**

Pathstone Mental Health is the primary provider of children's mental health services in the Niagara Region for children and youth from 0 – 18 years and their families. The work of all stakeholders at Pathstone is guided by our mission statement: "We strengthen the quality of life for children, youth and families who are dealing with mental health challenges".

Pathstone Mental Health, which is fully accredited through the Canadian Council of Accreditation, offers a continuum of mental health treatment services that includes Brief Services, Early Years Services, Outpatient Counselling, Outreach Services, School-based Services, Day Treatment (Section 23) classrooms, Residential Treatment, High Risk Services, Youth Justice Programs and Crisis Services.

In particular, Pathstone Mental Health works in collaboration with the DSBN with the School-based team, to which the DSBN makes direct referrals for clinical supports for children and youth requiring intensive treatment services.

Pathstone Mental Health has nine (9) Day Treatment (Section 23) classrooms. Within these Section 23 classrooms, the teacher is provided by the DSBN and child and youth worker in the classroom is provided by Pathstone Mental Health. All students in these classrooms and their families are also provided treatment by the social worker/therapist assigned to their specific classroom and may also be referred to one of the agency's consulting psychiatrist/psychologists.

Pathstone Day Treatment Classrooms are located at:

Merrittville site (4 elementary classrooms)  
Westlane Secondary School  
Eastdale Secondary School  
St. Catharines Collegiate (12 classrooms)  
Thorold Secondary School

**Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI)**

In developing a Service Plan for an individual /family, a Service Provider may feel that residential services through CPRI would best meet the needs of the student and would be the most appropriate resource for a particular student. In such a case, the Service Provider will call Contact Niagara and request a referral to CPRI for residential treatment. The DSBN, with parental/guardian consent, provides documentation (school reports, psychological assessment reports, etc.) to the Service Provider who is making the referral for residential placement. CPRI also offers consultative services accessed through Contact Niagara.

**Niagara Health System**

The Niagara Health System provides a Section 23 classroom at the St. Catharines General Hospital for school aged students who are clients of the Child and Adolescent (Mental Health) Clinic offered at this hospital and who benefit from instruction in a therapeutic setting.

**NTEC – Niagara Support Services**

The DSBN provides teaching staff for students in Section 23 Classrooms in the following programs:

- A secondary Day Treatment Program for students grade 9 – 12 at the NTEC Agency site in Port Robinson.
- A Children's Autism Program located in Niagara Falls for children grades 1 – 8.

**YOUTH JUSTICE****John Hoard Society – Community based Youth Justice**

The J.H.S. provides a section 23 classroom housed in St. Catharines for elementary school students in grades 5 – 8, who are involved with the John Howard Society.

**Detention and Correction Facilities**

The DSBN provides teaching staff for students in Section 23 classrooms in the following detention and correction facilities.

- Niagara Detention Centre
- Peninsula Youth Centre

Copies of these agreements are available through the Student Achievement Leader of Section 23



**Bethesda**

Within this agency there are various services that address specific areas of need for children and adolescents with developmental needs. The chart below shows the programs and services that are available through Bethesda:

	Program Description	Referral Criteria
<b>Children's Developmental Assessment Services</b>	CDAS provides comprehensive developmental assessments for children where a Developmental Disability or ASD is diagnosed or is suspected. Assessments may be conducted by a multi-disciplinary team and may take place within the school setting. With parental consent, assessments can be shared with the DSBN.	<b>Full Team</b> - (Ages 4-17) Referrals must be supported by a doctor.  <b>Psychological Assessments</b> (Age – under 18) where there is a question of a Developmental Disability. Concerns about a child's learning in the classroom should be redirected to the school.
<b>Children's Behaviour Services</b>	CBS provides behavioural consultation, treatment and education for children who have a Developmental Disability, their families and support staff.	<b>Age</b> – under 18  <b>Referral Source</b> – Anyone can make a referral for a child who has a diagnosis of a Developmental Disability.
<b>Hamilton-Niagara Regional Autism Intervention Program</b>	AI is clinical supervised by McMaster Children's Hospital and offers effective behavioural intervention services for young children with ASD. These services can improve the children's ability to function and participate in their community and can enhance the quality of life for themselves and their families.	<b>Age</b> – under 18  <b>Referral Source</b> – Anyone can make a referral for children who have a diagnosis of ASD or PDD NOS. An assessment is completed to determine eligibility for this program.
<b>Autism Consultation Services</b>	ACS provides behavioural consultation, support and education to families and agencies for children diagnosed with ASD.	<b>Age</b> – under 18  <b>Referral Source</b> – Anyone can make a referral for a child who has a confirmed diagnosis of ASD.

**Section 3****COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES  
OR AGENCIES**

	Program Description	Referral Criteria
<b>ASD Respite Services</b>	ASD Respite Services offers a variety of options for children ages 2.5 to 17, including After-School Social Skills Programs, Preschool Groups, Saturday Recreation Programs, Summer Camp, Flex Funds and Intensive In-Home Respite.	<b>Age</b> – 2.5 to 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday  <b>Referral Source</b> – Anyone can make a referral for a child who has a diagnosis of ASD.
<b>Applied Behaviour Analysis Services and Supports</b>	ABA is clinical supervised by McMaster Children's Hospital and provides short-term goal orientated interventions for children under the age of 18 who have a diagnosis of ASD. ABA focuses on skill development in the following areas: communication, social skills, daily living skills and behaviour management/emotional control.	<b>Age</b> – under 18  <b>Referral Source</b> – Anyone can make a referral for a child who has a diagnosis of ASD.

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

In-school support is offered to students with exceptional physical/medical needs through funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

The District School Board of Niagara is committed to a strong partnership with our Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) in order to ensure students receive all the necessary supports they require to participate fully in the learning environment.

Some students with medical needs under the care of the DSBN require feeding, suctioning, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and/or speech therapy. Through consultation with, and referral to CCAC, these services are provided to students who require them. In some cases, training is provided to ensure that procedures are carried out correctly.

To address the needs of students requiring medication during the school day, the District School Board of Niagara has developed a Policy (G-16) and Administrative Procedure (3-12) regarding the dispensing of medication.

## Section 4

## SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (CCAC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support
<b>NURSING</b>  Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- manual expression of the bladder</li> <li>- stoma care</li> <li>- postural drainage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Home Care staff performs the service if indicated in PPM 81.</li> <li>- CCAC contracted provider may train school staff to carry out procedure as per PPM 81 guidelines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- must attend school within Niagara Region</li> <li>- must have an Ontario Health Card Number</li> <li>- service required to enable school attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- student no longer needs special help or the program can be carried out by school personnel</li> <li>- student is not benefiting from the planned care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC appeal process</li> </ul>
<b>OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC performs service for intensive clinical treatment</li> <li>- CCAC trains Board personnel to carry out general maintenance exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- condition must be such that he/she can be treated adequately at school with services available through SHSS</li> <li>- student's needs cannot be met on an out-patient basis without significant disruption to the student's education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- student no longer needs special help or the program can be carried out by school personnel</li> <li>- student is not benefiting from the planned care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC appeal process</li> </ul>
<b>PHYSIOTHERAPY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC performs service for intensive clinical treatment</li> <li>- CCAC trains Board personnel to carry out general maintenance exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- must be referred by a representative of school</li> <li>- service required to enable school attendance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- student no longer needs special help or the program can be carried out by school personnel</li> <li>- student is not benefiting from the planned care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC appeal process</li> </ul>
<b>NUTRITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Home Care Staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ontario Health Card</li> <li>- service required to enable school attendance</li> <li>- nutritional concern is related to a medical condition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC Case Manager determines how, when, and where the service will be provided (in consultation with school personnel and parents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student specific goals achieved no longer appropriate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CCAC appeal process</li> </ul>

## Section 4

## SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (CCAC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedure for resolving disputes etc.
<b>SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY</b>  Preschool S/L Services  NCC	- only CCAC Speech-Language Pathologists provide therapy for children with articulation phonology voice/ fluency disorders structural or oral motor concerns	Speech disorders include: - oral motor - structural - phonological difficulty - voice/fluency disorders	- Board Speech-Language Pathologist assesses the student and makes a request for service from CCAC - CCAC Speech-Language Pathologist determine how, when and where the service will be provided	- student no longer needs special help or the program can be carried out by school personnel - student is not benefiting from the planned care	- CCAC appeal process
<b>SPEECH CORRECTION AND REMEDIATION</b>	- Teachers, LRT's, Parents	Mild Articulation Delay - referral through IST to Speech-Language Pathologist	- School Board Speech-Language Pathologist	- student no longer needs special help	- Case conference involving school personnel & parent
<b>ADMINISTERING OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATIONS</b>  <b>ORAL AND TOPICAL</b>	- School staff member appointed by Principal - student as authorized - parent as authorized	- Medical orders - Medical condition	- Prescribed by physician or other health care professional and requested by the parent (see Admin. Procedure, 3-12)	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	- Case Conference
<b>INJECTION</b>	- CCAC Health Professional - student as authorized - parent as authorized	- Prescription - Medical condition	- Physician	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer bene-fitting from the planned care	- Case Conference
<b>CATHETERIZATION</b> (Clean and intermittent)	- Educational assistant (trained by nursing agency assigned by CCAC Niagara) - Sterile Intermittent (by nursing agency assigned by CCAC Niagara)	- Medical orders - Medical condition	- Physician, CCAC Case Manager decides how, when, and where treatment/services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel)	- when appropriate student will be taught to perform procedures	- Case Conference - CCAC appeal process
<b>SUCTIONING</b>	Shallow Surface - Educational Assistant  Deep Suctioning - nursing agency assigned by CCAC	- Medical orders - Medical condition	- Physician and Home Care Coordinator decides how, when, and where treatment/ services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel)	- student no longer requires special care	- Case Conference - CCAC appeal process

TYPE of Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or Position of Person WHO PERFORMS THE SERVICE (CCAC, Board Staff, Parent, Student)	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA for Students to Receive the Service	Position of the Person WHO DETERMINES ELIGIBILITY to Receive the Service and the Level of Support	Criteria for Determining WHEN THE SERVICE IS NO LONGER REQUIRED	Procedure for resolving disputes etc.
<b>LIFTING AND POSITIONING</b>	- School Personnel (Educational Assistant)	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo #81	- CCAC Case Manager decides how, when, and where treatment/ services will be provided (in consultation with parents and school personnel)	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	- Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
<b>ASSISTANCE WITH MOBILITY</b>	- School personnel (EA) perform the service - CCAC Physiotherapists train Board personnel to provide assistance with mobility	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo #81	- Case Physiotherapist	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	- Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
<b>FEEDING</b>	Tube Feeding - CCAC assigned nursing agency Oral Feeding - Educational Assistant	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo #81 - medical orders for tube feeding required	- Physician - CCAC Case Manager	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	- Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
<b>TOILETING</b>	- Educational Assistants CCAC is not involved with toileting unless teaching catheterization to EA or therapists addressing equipment and transfers	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo #81	- Physician - CCAC Case Manager	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	- Case Conference at school level with appropriate personnel
<b>OTHER</b> All services in Children's Residential Care/Treatment Facilities	- Aides/Health Professional employed by MCSS	- all students in need according to Policy/Program Memo #81	- MCSS	- student no longer requires special care or is no longer benefiting from the planned care	

Note: Should a need develop for a service which has not already been designated, the matter should be referred by the School Board to the Ministry of Education for its consideration in consultation with the Ministry of Health.

## Section 4

## SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS



### APPLICATION FOR SCHOOL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES

#### A. STUDENT INFORMATION (please print)

<b>Surname:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	
Date of Birth (dd/mm/yy):	Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	
Address:	City:	Postal Code:
Health Card Number (HCN):	VC:	
<b>Mandatory: HCN is required by HNHB CCAC in accordance with the Long-Term Care Act, 1994 to determine student's eligibility for CCAC</b>		
Parent/Guardian: Legal Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Living with: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name:	Relationship:	
Home Phone #: ( )	Work #: ( )	Cell #: ( )
Parent/Guardian: Legal Guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Living with: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Name:	Relationship:	
Home Phone #: ( )	Work #: ( )	Cell #: ( )
Family Physician:	Phone: ( )	
Medical Diagnosis:		
Language Spoken in Home (if other than English):		
Other Medical / Professional Personnel:		

#### B. SCHOOL INFORMATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Separate <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Home	Specify Board:
School:	City:
Resource Teacher:	Phone: ( ) Fax: ( )

#### C. SERVICES REQUESTED

<input type="checkbox"/> Nursing	<input type="checkbox"/> Safety / Accessibility
<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Therapy**	<input type="checkbox"/> Equipment
<input type="checkbox"/> Physiotherapy**	<input type="checkbox"/> Re – referral
<input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition	
<input type="checkbox"/> Speech Therapy**	
For 'Private and Home School' only: <input type="checkbox"/> Personal support <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment	

**\*\*Mandatory – Supporting documentation must accompany referral**

#### D. RELEASE OF INFORMATION & CONSENT TO ASSESSMENT

I do hereby give consent to the school to release/share information including Third Party records, relevant to the care and status of my child to the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) as deemed necessary for assessment of School Health Support Services. I consent to the following:

- ☐ HNHB CCAC will enter the referral information into its database;
- ☐ HNHB CCAC will share referral information with their contracted Service Providers;
- ☐ HNHB CCAC will exchange and share information with school / school will exchange and share information with HNHB CCAC.

Parent/Guardian or Student (16 years+): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(dd/mm/yy)

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Designate Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

As a CCAC client, or as a guardian acting on behalf of a client, you have the right to refuse to provide personal information for the purposes explained above. Refusal to provide this information may impact on CCAC's ability to provide services. No information is released for any other purpose without your consent, unless required by law.

**Fax to:** HNHB CCAC Intake (1-866-655-6402) / (905) 639-8704, or **Mail to:** HNHB CCAC Intake ♦ 440 Elizabeth Street, 4th Floor ♦ Burlington, ON, L7R 2M1



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**GOAL**

The District School Board of Niagara is an educational community that is constantly striving for excellence, through continuous commitment to students and the provision of learning experiences that are challenging and relevant. Therefore, our staff development goal is to provide on-going in-service and training opportunities for all staff, including sessions targeting staff that work with students with exceptional learning needs.

In order to ensure that Staff Development meets the varied needs in the system, there is a combination of:

- School based support (e.g., job-embedded, working in classrooms with school staff and students)
- Board provided workshops/programs (e.g., LRT in-service, EA mentoring, Deaf Hard of Hearing Awareness and many others)
- Opportunities to attend Ministry and Third Party Conferences and Training (e.g., Geneva Centre, Association for Special Education Technology, London Region Special Education Regional Co-ordinator and Consultant Conference)

The School Support Services Department provides training to specific staff groups in Non Violent Crisis Intervention Training, First Aid, Smart Start Program for staff who work with Special Education students. We have initiated specialized Assistive Technology training for students and staff to ensure effective integration of these resources into classroom programming. School Support Services works to provide in-service that reflects the Learning for All resource rolled out through the Ministry of Education. Curriculum initiatives ensure all students learning strengths and needs are incorporated into professional development opportunities.



The District School Board of Niagara has a multi-year capital expenditure plan for improving accessibility to its buildings, grounds and administrative offices, including resources dedicated to providing barrier-free access in the coming years. The Board's Plan includes increasing accessibility to as many school buildings as possible and provides specific facilities to accommodate special needs students.

In consideration of the number and age of the Board's facilities, this plan improves accessibility each year in designated facilities across the District to service the needs of the students, staff, parents/guardians and the general public in the District School Board of Niagara. In preparing this plan, first, a database of the Board's facilities with respect to physical conditions relative to accessibility was developed and then analyzed by a working group of Board Special Education Services and Plant Department staff. This information was then reviewed and input was received from school Principals and Superintendents of Schools for each Area. From this, a group of facilities were identified as accessible and a list of candidate facilities for accessibility improvements, in consideration of physical feasibility, geographic location and education program delivery was developed.

Each year the plan is reviewed and adjusted to meet the needs of the system with the goal of making all Board facilities physically accessible by 2025 to comply with Disabilities Act 2005.

In addition to the Accessibility Plan, school boards were also required to respond to the Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The DSBN developed a policy (C-3) in compliance with the AODA and also trained all staff. As additional Standards become Regulations in the Province, the Board will develop appropriate measures as required.

Further accessibility information for Ontario Public Service sectors can be viewed at <https://www.ontario.ca/government/accessibility>, as well [www.opsba.org/index.php?q=advocacyandaction/accessible schools customer service guide](http://www.opsba.org/index.php?q=advocacyandaction/accessible%20schools%20customer%20service%20guide).



A Parent's Guide to  
**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER





## Message from the Director

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At the District School Board of Niagara, we believe all children are equal and should have the same opportunity to experience success. This fundamental belief forms the core of the DSBN's Special Education programming.

Children with special education needs do not see themselves through the lens of a condition. They simply see themselves as children. They have the same desires as every other child: to be loved, to learn and to make a positive contribution.

We believe all children can learn, and we know that all children learn differently. Our Special Education supports and accommodations are designed to meet the unique learning needs of each student identified as exceptional. Students are supported through their Individual Education Plan (IEP) and a school team which works to create a learning environment that promotes inclusion and full participation for all students.

Parents are also important partners in creating a rich educational experience for students. Parents want the best for their children. They envision a future filled with hope and possibility, where their children experience joy, friendship and all the hallmarks of a fulfilled life. Regular and ongoing communication between the school and home helps create the conditions for that kind of personal prosperity. Our schools welcome the opportunity to work with parents to ensure students are benefiting from the most effective supports and instruction.

Children with special education needs have much to offer. Their strength and determination teaches us to look at the world differently; to see it as a place of opportunity and diversity. By working with students with diverse learning needs, we truly come to understand that there is no such thing as impossible. It is a tremendous experience of personal growth for all involved and, as a Board, we are honoured to be entrusted with their education.

Sincerely,

Warren Hoshizaki  
Director of Education

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION





## Table of Contents

OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

1

PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING SUPPORTS FOR  
STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

2

COLLABORATING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

7

THE IPRC PROCESS

8

Exceptionalities  
Placements  
Programs

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

17

PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS

18

TIPS FOR PARENTS

19

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION



## THE FRAMEWORK AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION WITHIN THE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

The provisions of special education programs and services within the District School Board of Niagara are mandated by the Education Act and the regulations contained within Regulation 181/98 is the provincial legislation which determines special education operating procedures within Ontario. The practices and procedures of the District School Board of Niagara strive to encompass both diverse and individualized supports, while reflecting the intent of this legislation.

In the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN), Special Education is a collaborative process that encompasses the supports, services and strategies that provide the opportunities for each student to reach his/her potential. Each student is a unique individual with his/her own strengths and needs and some students may require special education supports and services to achieve success. At the District School Board of Niagara there is a full continuum of services available to help support the unique needs of each child.

Parents and families are an integral part of a successful education. You are invited and encouraged to be involved through ongoing communication with the school. Your knowledge and input is of utmost importance when planning supports for your child within the education setting. The goal for each child is to ensure that they are served in the most enabling environment that lends itself to their individualized success. The DSBN strives to build a school community that values the learning differences and contributions of each and every student.

### **The Parent's Guide to Special Education**

The District School Board of Niagara values parents as a key stakeholder in their child's education. We have worked to create a guide that is inviting, provides information about our special education services and supports a framework for a positive, collaborative working.

The Ministry of Education requires that all school boards have available a guide for parents to inform them of Special Education services in their board.

This Parent Guide is available in Braille, large print and audio format, please contact the Board to request one of these alternate formats if required.

## OVERVIEW



## PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The District School Board of Niagara is committed to offering a wide range of both special education services and programs to students board-wide. We provide supports and programs that are responsive to the strengths and needs of each student ensuring a successful learning environment for all. Working together and collaborating as a team to support every child is essential to achieving success.

### Special Education Services

Special Education Services refer to the facilities, resources and equipment necessary for developing and implementing a student's special education program. The District School Board of Niagara is committed to providing a full range of services to meet the needs of all students. These services can include, but are not limited to, LRT/SERT support, technology and accessibility equipment, Speech Language Pathology or Psychological Assessment, and or consultation, Youth Counsellor and/or Social Work support.

### Special Education Programs

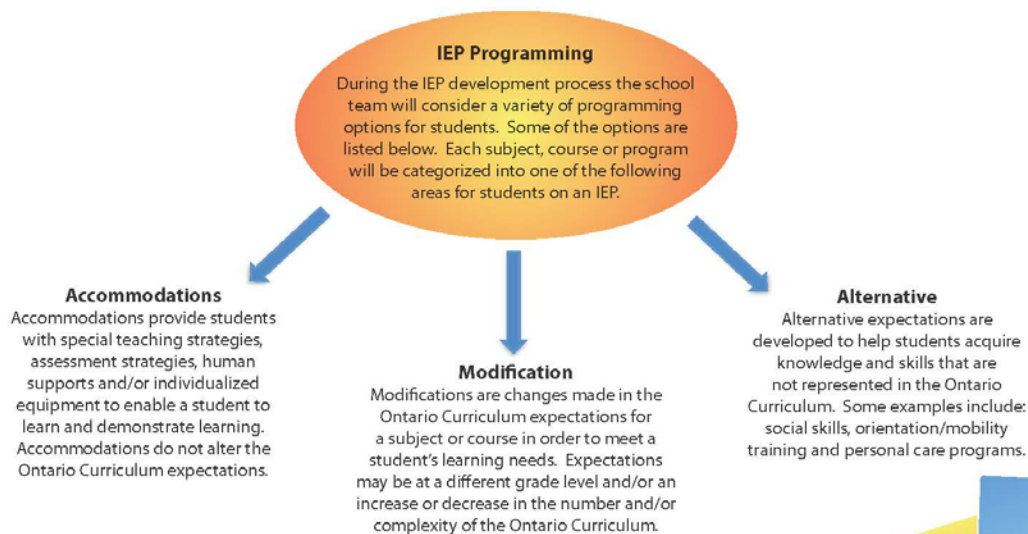
All special education programs are based on the results of continuous assessment and evaluation, and must be outlined on an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The District School Board of Niagara believes that all students have the right to learn in a program setting that best supports and meets their needs. There are a variety of programs available within the District School Board of Niagara to help support students with smaller classroom sizes and smaller teacher to student ratio. These teachers are qualified special education teachers.

## THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP).

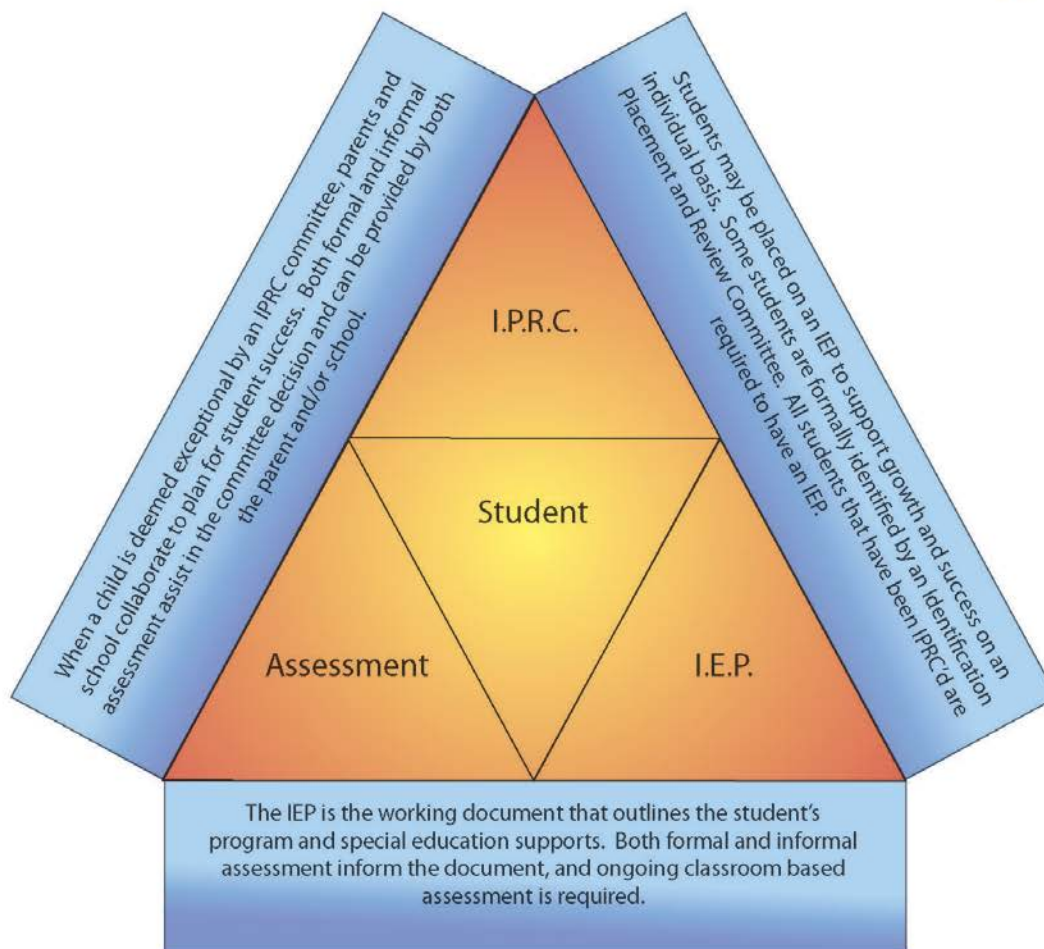
An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a written plan that outlines programming for a student with special education needs. An IEP defines a student's strengths and needs, and identifies accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum or alternative expectations that make up a student's program. The IEP is a working document and as such, revisions and updates are required and should be expected. Parental input is essential and welcomed in the development of the IEP. The school will work with you to develop a program that supports your child and ensures that you are kept up to date regarding changes and revisions. A copy will be kept in your child's Ontario Student Record.

When students struggle with some aspects of learning, the In-School Team may decide, in consultation with you, to begin an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child. IEP's can be created to support programming that is accommodated, modified and/or alternative. All programming must be assessed, monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis and reported on through either the Ontario Provincial Report Card (accommodated, modified programming) or an Alternative Report Card (alternative programming).

For students who have been formally identified through the IPRC process, an IEP is a mandatory and valuable programming plan to set goals, strategies and plan assessment that serve the individual needs of your child specifically.



## PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS





### Transition Planning

All students that have an Individual Education Plan in place will have a transition plan to support them. Transitions from within the school environment, between schools/grades, school to work, further education and community opportunities require supports and planning to allow student success. The probability of a successful transition is significantly increased when schools work with parents/guardians, employers, community agencies, and providers of further education to develop coordinated transition plans for exceptional students. (Transition Planning: A Resource Guide 2002) Transition plans can include a variety of supports for students.

Below are some examples of transition processes that are in place at the District School Board of Niagara:

**Preschool Transition Process** – DSBN Staff work with local preschool resource consultants and various community agencies to ensure preschoolers with educational needs enter DSBN schools successfully. Developing transition plans, sharing information and providing support to families new to the DSBN are key components to the Preschool Transition Process.

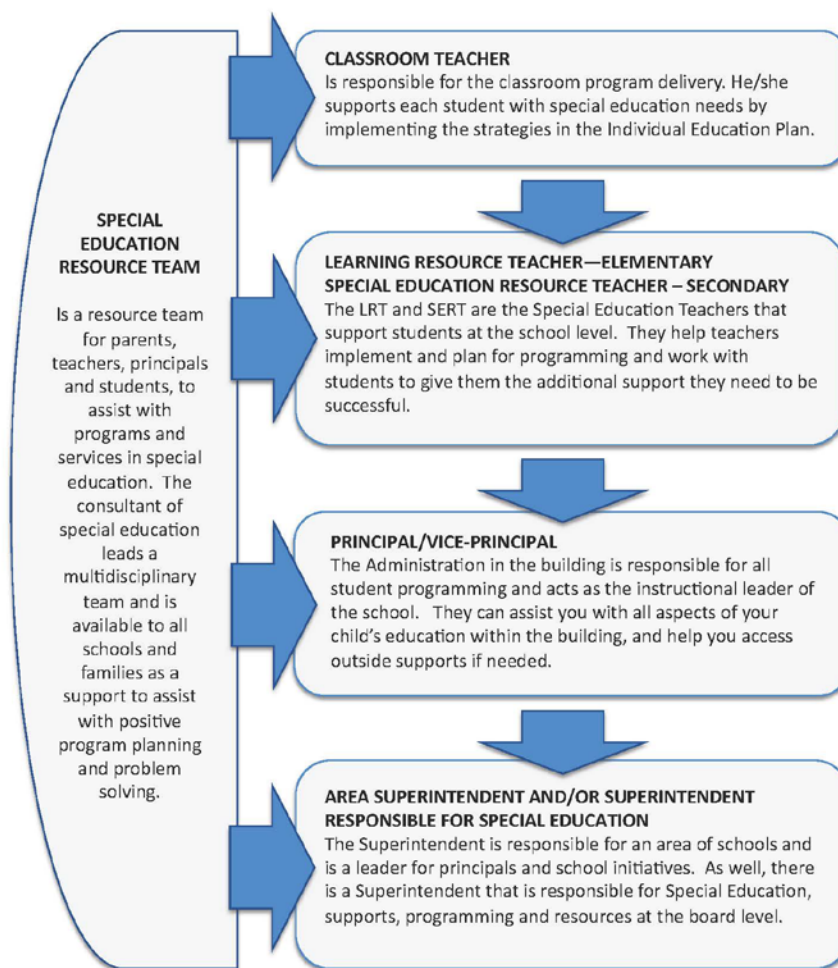
**Connections for Students** – Students who are transitioning out of Autism Intervention Programs within the community, such as Intensive Behavioural Intervention are supported by our ABA Facilitator and Special Education Team to make the return to school successful.

**Grade 8 to 9 Transition** – A transition form is completed for every student entering grade 9. This information is shared with the receiving school staff to ensure that the learning strengths and needs of each student are considered before the student even starts secondary school. For students on an IEP, this may include a meeting with both the elementary and secondary school staff.

**Integrated Transition Planning** – The DSBN works closely with other community agencies and other Ministries to ensure that proper transition planning takes place for student with developmental disabilities. For some students school transition planning may take place to support transitions within the school environment, between grades and schools. In addition, at age 14, students will be offered an Integrated Transition Process that the school will facilitate to assist families and students in planning longer term for transition to community opportunities. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and The Ministry of Education have created a framework and collaborative plan to provide a more streamlined integrated transition planning process to support young people with developmental disabilities who are preparing for transition to adulthood.

While the above are some of the main processes that have been put in place to ensure planning opportunities and parental input, transition planning takes place day to day for many students within the school board. We recognize that the needs of every child are different and individual plans and considerations are needed.

## Consultation Sequence for Special Education Questions and Concerns



## COLLABORATING WITH YOUR SCHOOL

### Collaborating with Your Child's School

Collaboration with parents as partners is essential to a supported learning environment for every child. Your continued involvement in the education that your child receives is most valuable. To ensure that we are programming effectively for your child's strengths and needs in the educational setting we value your knowledge and input.

Communication is the key to a collaborative and effective relationship. Keeping the lines of communication open between the school and home sets the stage for student success. The school is ready to support you and your child with their learning needs from the moment they enter the school system. There are many transition processes in place to ensure that families and students feel supported in their education.

Early and ongoing assessment of students takes place in all classrooms to ensure that students are being programmed for effectively. If you or your child's teacher feel that your child is having learning difficulties, early communication is key. There are a variety of early intervention strategies that can be implemented to assist students in being successful and we want to work with you to determine the best supports to assist your child.

Each school in the District School Board of Niagara is required to establish an In School Team with the principal as chair. This formalized on-going problem solving forum is in place to assist the school in determining supports and next steps for every child in the building. The team develops and reviews plans designed to enable students who are experiencing difficulty to succeed. At the secondary level, it is referred to as the In-School Student Success Team to reinforce the collaboration among the Student Success and Guidance resource departments.

If the In-School Team determines that additional supports may be needed, they have access to a Multidisciplinary Team at the school board level, that provides ongoing support for students, teachers, staff and schools.

Some of the DSBN Staff that may be part of the In School or Multidisciplinary Team:

Classroom Staff	School Staff	DSBN Board Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom Teacher</li> <li>• Educational Assistant</li> <li>• Special Education Teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principal</li> <li>• Vice-Principal</li> <li>• Learning Resource Teacher (elementary)</li> <li>• Special Education Resource Teacher (secondary)</li> <li>• Student Success Teacher (secondary)</li> <li>• Guidance Teacher (secondary)</li> <li>• Instructional Coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Achievement Leader - Special Education</li> <li>• Consultant Special Education</li> <li>• Resource Teacher</li> <li>• Central Educational Assistant</li> <li>• Speech Language Pathologist</li> <li>• Psychologist or Psychological Associate</li> <li>• Youth Counsellor</li> <li>• Social Workers</li> <li>• ABA facilitator</li> </ul>

## IDENTIFICATION PLACEMENT AND REVIEW COMMITTEES

### What is an IPRC?

An Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meet to determine whether a student is exceptional and what placement and program will best support the student. This committee of educators will meet with you to discuss the special education needs of your child. If your child is over 16 years old, they are invited to participate in the meeting. In collaboration with you, the team will make decisions on how best to meet the needs of your child. This meeting takes place annually to review the decision, but can be held more frequently when change and collaboration is needed.

The committee has three required team members. A principal chairs the meeting and two other staff members take part, to make up the committee of three. As the parent/student, you play an important role in helping the committee make good decisions about your child and the support options that are available within the District School Board of Niagara. You are encouraged to ask questions at the meeting and to provide the IPRC with any relevant information you consider important to the decisions of the IPRC.

**Along with the Principal, the committee could have any of the following educators present as committee members:**

- classroom Teacher or Learning Resource Teacher/Special Education Resource Teacher for the school
- school Support Services Staff – Special Education, Consultant or Resource Teacher
- Vice-Principal of the school
- other School/Board staff that have a good understanding of your child

## THE I.P.R.C. PROCESS



**The IPRC Committee will:**

- determine whether or not your child should be identified as exceptional according to the Ministry of Education's definitions of exceptionalities. (as outlined on Appendix A)
- decide on an appropriate placement based on the strengths and needs of your child. The committee has a duty to discuss and describe the strengths and needs of your child when making the IPRC decisions.
- be responsible for making initial decisions about exceptionality, placement and program, as well as review these decisions each year. The Ministry of Education allows for a review to take place after three months if the parent or school feel that it is in the child's best interest, however, a yearly review is required.
- move forward with its decision when the parent or student (16 years or older) is comfortable with the recommendations.

**What role do I play in the IPRC Meeting?**

- We recognize that parents have the most valuable input when it comes to their child, and we encourage each parent to share, collaborate and be involved in their child's education and planning. As well, students 16 years and older, can participate as a valuable partner in planning their educational program.
- The committee will ask for your input and discuss with you the options that are available in the District School Board of Niagara. You are encouraged to ask questions and seek clarification if needed. We strive to ensure that you understand the options being provided and move forward only when you have consented to the IPRC Decision.
- The Education Act requires that we inform you that you can appeal the IPRC decision if you have not been able to resolve your concerns with the school. You have 15 days once the decision is made to request that another IPRC be held to discuss your concerns. If you do not agree with the decision after this second meeting you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days, to the Secretary of the District School Board of Niagara, 191 Carlton St., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P4. You can also appeal to the Secretary of the District School Board of Niagara with 30 days of the original IPRC meeting, as an alternative to the above.

### I.P.R.C. Appeal Process

At the District School Board of Niagara we strive to meet the needs of all learners through a collaborative process with parents. During the IPRC process your input is not only valued but necessary for us to move forward with the identification and placement decision. If there is ever a time that you are feeling uncomfortable with the discussion, re-consider or would like to have further discussion with the committee please speak with the principal of your child's school. We believe that working together to come to the right decision is needed for all parties.

The Ministry of Education requires that we inform you of your right to appeal the Identification Placement and Review Committee decision should you disagree. The following is the process should you feel unsuccessful when speaking with the principal and the Student Achievement Leader for Special Education:

- within 15 days of receipt of the decision, request that the IPRC hold a second meeting to discuss your concerns: or
- within 30 days of receipt of the decision, file a notice of appeal with the Secretary for the District School Board of Niagara, 191 Carlton St., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 7P4.
- if you do not agree with the decision after the second meeting, you may file a notice of appeal within 15 days of your receipt of the decision.

The notice of appeal must:

- indicate the decision with which you disagree; and
- include a statement that sets out your reasons for disagreeing.

**What happens when the appeal process is implemented?**

The appeal process involves the following steps:

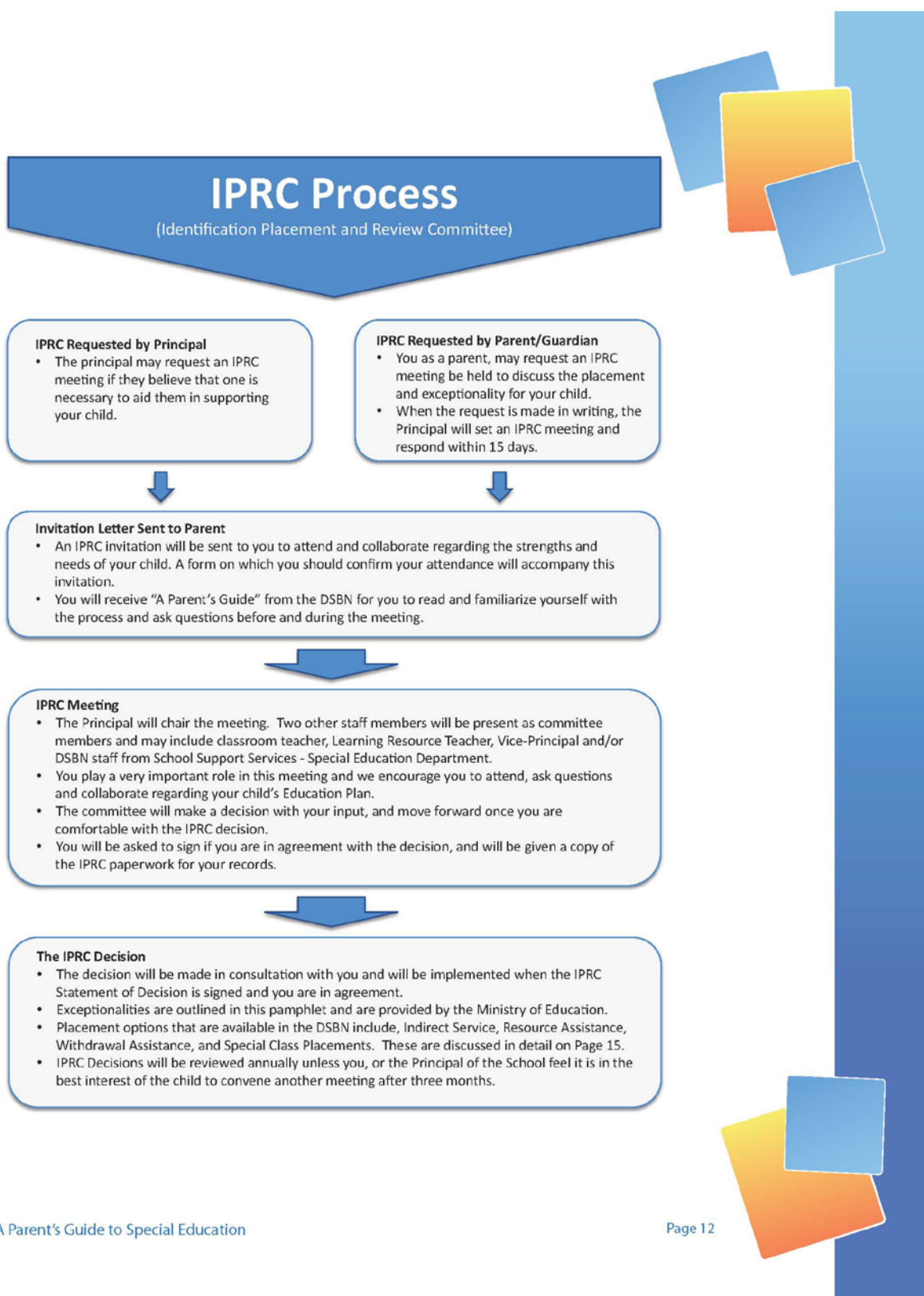
- the board will establish a special education appeal board to hear your appeal. The appeal board will be composed of three persons who have no prior knowledge of the matter under appeal, one of whom will be selected by you, the parent.
- the chair of the appeal board will arrange a meeting to take place at a convenient time and place, but no later than 30 days after he or she has been selected unless parents and board provide written consent to a later date.
- the appeal board will receive the material reviewed by the IPRC and may interview any persons who may be able to contribute information about the matter under appeal.

Parents and students, 16 years old or over, are entitled to be present at the meeting, and to participate in all discussions. After the meeting the appeal board must make its recommendation within three days of the meeting's ending. The appeal board may agree or disagree with the recommendation. If they agree, they will recommend that the decision be implemented. If they disagree they will make a recommendation to the board about your child's identification or placement or both. The appeal board will report its recommendations to you in writing, outlining the reasons for its recommendations.

If the board does not follow the suggested recommendations you may appeal to the Special Education Tribunal. The following steps should be followed:

- request a hearing by writing to the secretary of the Special Education Tribunal.
- all necessary information to make an application to the Special Education Tribunal will be included in the appeal board's statement of decision.

While this procedure and process is in place to ensure that parents' and students' rights are protected with regards to special education Identification Placement and Review Committee decisions, we encourage you to inform the school principal, and subsequently the Superintendent of School Support Services if further assistance is needed prior to beginning an appeal process.





## CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Behaviour</b>	
<b>Behaviour</b>	A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance, and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;</li> <li>b) excessive fears or anxieties;</li> <li>c) a tendency to compulsive reaction;</li> <li>d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	
<b>Autism</b>	A severe learning disorder that is characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) disturbances in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– rate of educational development;</li> <li>– ability to relate to the environment;</li> <li>– mobility;</li> <li>– perception, speech, and language;</li> </ul> </li> <li>b) lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language</li> </ul>
<b>Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing</b>	An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.
<b>Language Impairment</b>	A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and</li> <li>b) include one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– language delay;</li> <li>– dysfluency;</li> <li>– voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Speech Impairment</b>	A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.
<b>Learning Disability</b>	One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are at least in the average range;</li> <li>– results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range) and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;</li> <li>– results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;</li> <li>– may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; executive functions (e.g. self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);</li> <li>– may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;</li> <li>– is not the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.</li> </ul>

## CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES CONT'D

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Intellectual</b>	
<b>Giftedness</b>	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
<b>Mild Intellectual Disability</b>	A learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service;</li> <li>b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development;</li> <li>c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</li> </ul>
<b>Developmental Disability</b>	A severe learning disorder characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development;</li> <li>b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development;</li> <li>c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.</li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	
<b>Physical Disability</b>	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of pupils without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
<b>Blind and Low Vision</b>	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
<b>Multiple</b>	
<b>Multiple Exceptionalities</b>	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

## PLACEMENT OPTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD OF NIAGARA

The District School Board believes that when discussing placements for students, the regular education classroom should always be the first consideration. We also believe that choices and options should be available to families to assist in meeting the unique educational needs of some students. A variety of placement options are available within the DSBN as outlined below.

### **Regular Education Classroom with Indirect Support**

- Your child's strengths and needs are addressed through an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child.
- The Regular Education Teacher and the Special Education Teacher in the school will collaborate and strategize together to best educate your child.
- The Regular Education Teacher delivers all programming and curriculum to your child.

### **Regular Education Classroom with Resource Assistance**

- Your child's strengths and needs are addressed through an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child.
- The Regular Education Teacher is assisted as needed by a Special Education Teacher, in delivering the curriculum to your child in his/her classroom.
- Your child may receive specialized instruction individually or in small groups within the regular classroom from a special education teacher.

### **Regular Education Classroom with Withdrawal Assistance**

- Your child's strengths and needs are addressed through an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child.
- The Regular Classroom Teacher delivers the majority of your child's program, and is assisted by the Special Education Teacher as needed.
- The Special Education Teacher may work both in your child's classroom or work privately/in groups with your child to help them reach their full potential.
- Your child receives some instruction outside the regular classroom for less than 50% of the day.

**Special Education Class with Partial Integration**

- Your child's strengths and needs are addressed through an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child.
- The Special Education Teacher delivers the majority of your child's program.
- The Regular Education Teacher will deliver portions of your child's program within a regular education classroom, as appropriate, to help your child reach their fullest potential.
- The Education Act requires that Special Education Class sizes are smaller than Regular Education Class Sizes to allow for more intensive educational supports.
- The student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298 of the Education Act for at least 50% of the day.

**Full-time Special Education Class**

- Your child's strengths and needs are addressed through an Individual Education Plan to support programming for your child.
- The Special Education Teacher delivers all of your child's program to them to help them reach their full potential.
- The Education Act requires that Special Education Class sizes are smaller than Regular Education Class Sizes to allow for more intensive educational supports.
- The student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298 of the Education Act for 100% of the day.



## SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS OFFERED AT THE DSBN

The District School Board of Niagara (DSBN) offers many program options for families and students to help them reach their educational potential. While the regular education classroom is always considered first, we recognize that some students require different programming options. The following programs offer the support of a Special Education Teacher, and in many cases the support of educational assistants. The DSBN believes that a range of placement options ensure that a variety of settings are available to support the specific programming needs of students.

Structured Strategies Program
This low-enrolment classroom engages learners working on Ontario Curriculum, with supplementary programming in social skills development and self-regulation. Strategies include, leveled breaks, sensory and movement breaks, social skills programming, assistive technology and a structured classroom environment. The goal of the program is to help students develop the independent self-regulation skills necessary to be successful in the regular classroom setting. This program is a collaborative approach to learning/teaching, and is supported by a special education teacher and educational assistant.
Communication Program
This class supports students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder and significant needs in the areas of expressive and receptive communication skills. Programming is based around individual needs and addressed through alternative curriculum. Augmentative communication strategies are used to promote independence and communication, and sensory regulation.
Fundamental Skills Program
This low-enrolment classroom supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs. Students are working on significantly modified curriculum expectations and programming is supplemented with functional skill development. In the program, students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic supports through individualized programming, and receive intensive support for physical needs as required. This program is taught by a special education teacher in collaboration with a classroom educational assistant.
Specialized School to Community Program
This low enrolment classroom supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative programming needs at the secondary level. Students may be working on modified Ontario Curriculum expectations and programming is supplemented with functional and vocational skill development as needed. In this programming students gain independent living skills, receive intensive academic supports through individualized programming, and receive support for intensive physical needs as required. Transition to the community is an integral part of the program, with a focus on building connections to community supports as students approach graduation.
Elementary Gifted Program
The students in the program demonstrate an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth best serviced in the Part-Time Gifted Program to allow them to reach their educational potential. Students in the program will have an Individual Education Plan that outlines the Alternative Expectations that the student will be completing, in the area of Higher Order Thinking Skills.

## PROGRAMS

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Many community organizations are available to assist parents/students with information and support them through special education processes.

All school boards are required to maintain a Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) that participates in monthly meetings to advise the District School Board of Niagara in making decisions about their Special Education programs and services.

The following community partners are members of the Special Education Advisory Committee for the District School Board of Niagara:

- Community Living
- Autism Ontario
- CNIB
- Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara
- Pathstone Mental Health
- Association for Bright Children - Ontario
- Niagara Support Services
- Niagara Regional Native Centre
- Niagara Children's Centre

Collaborating with community agencies to better support students and families is of utmost importance. It is always best practice to inform the school principal of people that will be attending a meeting to support you.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

## MINISTRY PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS

What are the Ministry's Provincial and Demonstration Schools?

The Ministry operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools throughout Ontario for students who are deaf, blind, deaf-blind, and severely learning-disabled including students with learning disabilities associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Residential programs are offered at the schools Monday to Friday, for students who live too far from school to travel daily.

### DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS FOR ENGLISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITIES, INCLUDING LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ADHD.

#### Amethyst School

1090 Highbury Avenue • London ON • N5Y 4V9  
Telephone: (519) 453-4408

#### Sagonaska School

350 Dundas Street West • Belleville ON • K8P 1B2  
Telephone: (613) 967-2830

#### Trillium School

347 Ontario Street South • Milton ON • L9T 3X9  
Telephone: (905) 878-2851

### SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF

#### Ernest C. Drury School

255 Ontario Street South • Milton ON • L9T 2M5  
Telephone: (905) 878-2851  
TTY: (905) 878-7195

#### Robarts School

1090 Highbury Avenue  
Box 7300 • London ON • N5Y 4V9  
Telephone and TTY: (519) 453-4400

#### Sir James Whitney School

350 Dundas Street West • Belleville ON • K8P 1B2  
Telephone and TTY: (613) 967-2823

### SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND DEAF-BLIND

#### W. Ross Macdonald School

350 Brant Avenue • Brantford ON • N3T 3J9  
Telephone: (519) 759-0730

Where can parents obtain additional information?

Additional information can be obtained from

- the school Principal,
- Student Achievement Leader - Special Education Services

School Support Services - DSBN  
130 Louth Street, St. Catharines, L2S 2T4  
905-227-5551

PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

The DSBN considers parents a valued partner when planning for their child's education. Collaboration and open communication between the school and home are essential to a good working relationship. Here are some things to consider when you have questions about your child's education or you have a planned meeting with the school:

- keeping a file at home that contains school information about your child is always a good idea. Report Cards, Individual Education Plans, assessments and IPRC forms are all important documents that can help when you meet with the school.
- your child's teacher is always the best person to contact regarding your child's progress. This can be done by phone, through a visit or an e mail. You can arrange a time to speak to your child's teachers when you have questions or information to share. Arranging a meeting is always possible and will support ongoing planning to address your child's needs.
- in preparing for a meeting, write down a few questions you have or the information you wish to share, prior to meeting with the school. This way you are sure to cover all of the topics you want to discuss and can stay focused on your goal.
- feel free to bring someone with you to the meeting: a friend, support person, parent advocate or community partner. Informing the principal prior to the meeting would be best practice.
- ask for clarification and explanations when needed. Special Education practices and processes can be overwhelming and the school wants to ensure that you understand and have all of your questions clarified.
- the principal can request resource staff from School Support Services to attend case conferences and meetings. The role of this person would be to offer support and further programming suggestions regarding your child's education.

Effective communication is the key to building relationships of mutual trust and cooperation. Although educators and parents share the same goal, each views the student's educational needs from a different perspective. The goal of the partnership between home and the school is to provide a welcoming nurturing environment where your child can achieve success and reach their fullest potential.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS



The District School Board of Niagara has established and will maintain a standing committee of the Board dedicated to advising the Board on issues related to Special Education. This committee has been established in keeping with Regulation 464/97 of The Education Act.

**Meeting Times/Locations**

- The regular meetings of SEAC are held on the second Thursday of every month during the school year commencing at 6:00 p.m. Meetings are regularly held at the Education Centre in St. Catharines; however, from time to time the committee meets at schools where specific Special Education programs are delivered.
- All SEAC meetings are open to the public.
- A majority of the members of a SEAC is a quorum, and "a vote of a majority of the members present at a meeting is necessary to bind the committee.
- The committee will hold 10 meetings through the year, as per their mandate from the Ministry of Education.
- The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is provided with the opportunity to:
  - collaborate on department initiatives related to Special Education;
  - participate in the Board's annual review of the Special Education Plan;
  - participate in the Board's annual budget process related to Special Education;
  - be heard before the Board;
  - have access to information, documents and facilities necessary for functioning.

**Membership**

- The committee is made up of representatives of local associations of parents/guardians and advocates for children with exceptional needs. Local associations operate within the geographical region of the District School Board of Niagara and are affiliated with an incorporated organization that operates throughout Ontario to further the interests and well-being of one or more groups of exceptional children or adults.
- Associations that meet the criteria are invited to choose a representative and alternate to participate in committee meetings. If the member is unable to attend it is expected that the alternate will attend. Attendance is closely monitored. Any association missing more than three consecutive meetings will be expected to forfeit their seat on SEAC. Where there is a duplication of local associations, as is the case with five Associations for Community Living across the Niagara Region, the associations have been asked to select one representative who takes responsibility for communicating with the other groups and carrying forward concerns from them.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of SEAC are nominated and elected by the representatives. The local associations who are members of the District School Board of Niagara SEAC represent:

- Autism Ontario;
- Niagara Support Services;
- Niagara Children's Centre;
- Association for Community Living;
- Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara;
- Niagara Regional Native Centre;
- Pathstone Mental Health;
- CNIB
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder-Ontario Network of Expertise
- Association for Bright Children Ontario

In addition, SEAC invites for consideration applications for membership from community agencies which have a mandate to support at-risk/exceptional students of elementary and secondary school age. The District School Board of Niagara Parents' Guide to Special Education contains an insert with a list of the associations that are on SEAC. The DSBN website also lists the members and their affiliations.

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### Roles and Responsibilities

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) members are consulted on matters related to service delivery, range of service, department resources, and are asked to advocate on behalf of the exceptionalities represented. The committee is provided with professional secretarial and office support. Two trustees from the Board are regular members of the committee. The Superintendent of Special Education Services, the Student Achievement Leader of Special Education Services, as well as an elementary and secondary Principal provide resource support to the committee. Other consultative and resource staff attend as required. SEAC advises the Board by way of a motion, letter or through the trustee representatives. All minutes of SEAC are routinely forwarded to all members of the Board through the Committee reports at Board meetings. During the school year, SEAC may discuss and provide input on a variety of items /issues including:

- Autism/ABA
- Preschool Transition
- Individual Education Plans
- Special Education Budget
- Accessibility Plan
- Special Education - Technology
- Differentiated Instruction
- Framework and Delivery Model of Supports
- Equity Policy and Framework
- Equity and Inclusive Education

SEAC members are encouraged to share information about the Board's programs and services with their organizations and at the same time to bring input from their organizations to the SEAC meetings. SEAC's involvement in the budget process is facilitated by:

- invitations to the Superintendent of Business to attend SEAC meetings, upon the request of SEAC members and/or the suggestion of the Superintendent of School Support Services to give updates about funding and budget;
- issues as they affect the District School Board of Niagara (e.g., provincial grants, one-time assessment grants, staffing needs, etc.);
- sharing of pertinent information/documents (e.g., copies of items presented to and discussed at the Board Finance Committee meetings - possible priorities for increased or decreased spending, funding revenues, etc.);
- overall and particularly as they apply to Special Education, the budget for the upcoming year as approved by the Board.

Parents/guardians and other members of the public may make their views known to SEAC by corresponding to the Chair of SEAC or through the office of the Superintendent of School Support Services, who is responsible for Special Education.